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Russia: Yeltsin Support Running at 'One-Third' in Yekaterinburg

MM3004124396 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Vladimir Stakheyev: "Yekaterinburg People Back Their Hometown Candidate"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yekaterinburg — One-third of Yekaterinburg people polled have declared a willingness to vote for their hometown candidate, Boris Yeltsin. There are 11 public organizations in the central Urals campaigning for his reelection. These include a branch of the Democratic Party of Russia, the "Chernobyl" Association, and some very large regional associations — "Transformation of the Urals" and "Our Home Is Our City." The Public Center for Support for the President is creating an extensive network of campaign centers in the oblast, including Yekaterinburg.

"We have to explain to people that this election is not just about personalities that people may or may not like. Society itself is faced with a crucial choice: What path is it going to follow?" That is the credo of the Ural people who have united around B. Yeltsin and who have chosen to support the reforms.

Russia: Claimed Rise in Yeltsin Ratings Ridiculed

MM3004142596 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Article by Yevgeniy Popov: "VTsIOM, Chase the Points! 'Kukly' on the President's 'Bad Luck Rating'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The latest edition of "Kukly" ["Puppets" — satirical puppet show], shown on NTV last Saturday, perhaps scored only one success, but admittedly this single direct hit is worth a lot. "The paler the canvas, the brighter the pattern," Valeriy Bryusov once noted. Obviously sensing that the general background is growing rather dull, screenwriter Viktor Shenderovich put into the chief puppet's mouth a very topical remark on the so-called sociological polls carried out by VTsIOM (the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion). "Hello, who is this? VTsIOM?" the president says, speaking into the telephone, and asks sternly: "Well, how many have I got?... That's not enough!... I'm telling you: It's not enough! Get on with it, you hear me, chase the points!.... And how many has he got?... That's got to come down! His points! What do you mean, 'whose'? Report back tomorrow on the results. That's all."

The actual situation regarding the president's rating (and the attempts by servile "sociologists" to present it as rapidly rising, catching up and even passing the rating of his main rival, Zyuganov) is even more comical than on "Kukly." Having gotten into big trouble twice — before the parliamentary elections in 1993 and 1995 — the "researchers" who seek to gratify the whim of those in power have drawn no conclusions for themselves. The profanation of sociology in connection with the issuing of percentages on this topic is continuing. And incidentally it is not only VTsIOM that is meticulously dredging up points according to the "What can I do for you?" method. The other day the "sociologists" of the Institute of Comparative Studies (TsESI) became the target of general mockery among both Russian and foreign analysts when they conducted a poll commissioned by THE MOSCOW TIMES newspaper and CNN television and announced a "sensation": Apparently, for the first time since the start of the election campaign, Yeltsin's rating exceeded the popularity indicator of the candidate from the bloc of people's patriotic forces, and reached 20.7 percent (while Zyuganov's was only 19.8 percent). These conclusions were subjected to ridicule even in the print organ of one of the commissioners of the poll. The weekly KAPITAL, published by THE MOSCOW TIMES editorial office, published in the "Cabbages and Kings" section an ironical commentary by Leonid Bershidskiy, "Has Yeltsin Really Passed Zyuganov?" Noting that according to the TsESI's estimates the margin of error of the conclusions is plus or minus 3 percent, the commentator cites Zyuganov's entirely reasonable expert opinion: A poll in which the margin of error is 3 percent is unreliable, but a poll with a greater margin of error than that is deliberate manipulation. Some obvious considerations speak in favor of the latter possibility. L. Bershidskiy formulates one of them thus: "Why, in any case, should the president expect an increase in popularity now in particular?" And indeed: Are ratings really likely to rise rapidly in the context of obvious failures in both domestic and foreign policy? Some of these failures are mentioned in the commentary. For instance, the embarrassment over the report of victory in eliminating wage arrears. And could the "Chechen peace initiative" have boosted the rating, when it resulted in the biggest losses for Russian troops and when the "military (from Minister Grachev to Tikhomirov, commander of the federal forces in Chechnya) openly state that they are not fulfilling the president's order to cease hostilities"?! Finally, Yeltsin's foreign policy "peace offensive" has brought him no marked dividends. As L. Bershidskiy notes, at the meeting with the G-7, Yeltsin's persistent requests at least to delay NATO expansion were "simply brushed aside," while he himself, at the final press conference, "got his papers muddled up in the style of the era of the decline of the Soviet empire, and looked tired out from banquets and fruitless talks."

It is true that his "Kukly" double looks much better! In the latest program, under the title "Single candidate from the democrats," Yeltsin locks his Kremlin mansion from inside and conducts a conference with his fellow contenders for the presidential title from the "democrats'" on a "starvation" basis — the method they say the cardinals use when choosing the next pope. On "Kukly" (as in life, thus far) neither Yavlinskiy, nor Lebed, nor Gorbachev, nor the other "democrats" are convinced by the Kremlin courtiers' all-purpose argument: "You don't change horses in midstream!" Especially since Yeltsin has been "midstream" "the whole time...since 1990." He has never actually gotten as far as the "furrow" which, according to the proverb, "an old horse will never spoil," and — this is quite obvious by now — he never will get there, he will only justify himself on the basis that even a horse stumbles on its four legs ("This isn't a man, it's some kind of centaur!" — the puppet Yavlinskiy exclaims in a fit of temper). So, as Gorbachev notes on "Kukly," "we have a nonsensical situation here: We have a quorum, but no consensus." And so the chief puppet has to rely on the never-failing VTsIOM. And it does not let him down: It chases the points! The day after "Kukly" made Yeltsin's instructions public, VTsIOM reported on the television programs "Zerkalo" and "Itogi": For the first time since the start of the election campaign, according to the "sociologists'" predictions, in the second round Yeltsin could count on victory over Zyuganov, albeit by a very small margin, only tenth parts of a percentage point, by 36.5 to 35.1, which given VTsIOM's 3-percent margin of error could mean precisely "vice versa." But 16 June is still some time off, and VTsIOM still has the opportunity to carry out in full the instructions made public on "Kukly" and correspondingly boost one rating and lower the other. But will these manipulations help? Will NTV not find itself, after 16 June, having to repeat in its TV parodies the old song about the "green, green grass of the bad luck rating," but this time performed by its very favorite puppet?!

Russia: Zyuganov Pays Campaign Visit to St. Petersburg

MM3004174796 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Sergey Ivanov: "Road of Life Through Blockade"]

[FBIS Translated Text] St. Petersburg — The countrywide election tour by G. Zyuganov, the candidate of the bloc of people's-patriotic forces, continues. He arrived in St. Petersburg shortly before the Victory Day holiday, which is sacred to our people. The opening of the fourth rally of hero-cities here was timed to coincide with this anniversary. For the inhabitants of the city on the Neva memories of the war are inextricably linked to the hardest ordeal that fell to the lot of their fathers and grandfathers — the blockade of Leningrad. "It is sad to admit that right now Leningraders are under blockade again," Yu. Belov, secretary of Leningrad CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] Oblast Committee, said when opening the rally, "this time an information blockade."

Indeed, the large number of journalists accompanying Zyuganov every step of the way sharply contrasted with the paucity of material shown on television. A fact which is, incidentally, symptomatic. B. Yeltsin never tires of repeating: "Yes, we have lost much (only a great country), but on the other hand we have acquired freedom." Meanwhile the whole election campaign is turning into a solo performance by him.

Zyuganov commented on the situation thus: "People try on shoes before choosing them, but prior to the election people are not being allowed to try on the candidates' programs for size."

Freedom of information is of great importance to Petersburg voters. According to city sociologists' data, a considerable proportion of Petersburgers (mainly the scientific and technical intelligentsia) rank this right first among their own election expectations. Engineering and technical personnel rank the opportunity to work in their profession and civic accord in society second. The very day before Zyuganov's arrival came the famous appeal from the country's major bankers to both main candidates for the presidency, in which they urged them not to split the country into two camps but to reach a compromise. In response to a question from journalists Zyuganov stated: "Our platform says they we are ready for a dialogue with all political forces. Nobody will achieve success on their own. Only the candidate from a broad coalition will become president. We have created such a bloc, and the doors to it are open to everybody who holds justice and patriotism dear. I have already arranged a meeting with the appeal's authors."

According to the presidential candidate, peace and harmony in society are his priority task. Otherwise the country, which has 27,000 nuclear warheads, around 30,000 especially dangerous production facilities, and dozens of nuclear reactors, is threatened with a calamity comparable only to a nuclear apocalypse. Zyuganov's visit coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster and it is symbolic that the next item on the agenda of his visit was a trip to the city of Sosnovyy Bor, where Leningrad Nuclear Electric Power Station [AES] is located.

But to achieve civic harmony a balance of economic interests must still be found. Here the new president will inherit a difficult legacy from the current authorities. This was discussed at a meeting between Zyuganov and Mayor of Sosnovyy Bor V. Nekrasov and leaders of enterprises in the city and oblast. One of them, N. Mikhaylov, recounted: "For Leningrad Oblast as a whole production fell by a factor of 2.7 compared with 1990. In a number of places, such as here, it totals only 10-12 percent of the previous level. Schools were closed in winter — there are no funds to repair the heating."

According to another participant in the meeting, the director of a construction and installation administration, in moving toward the market we have gone as far as to completely scrap commodity-money relations. As in the primeval tribe, they are being replaced by barter exchange. The administration is paid in, for example, cable, which is then exchanged for paper, which is shipped to Estonia, and wallpaper is received in return, and brains are racked for a long time over who to sell it to.

But Zyuganov is convinced that the nonpayments crisis has been artificially caused by the authorities. They have hiked prices a thousandfold but have not concerned themselves with the money supply. A. Chubays sold 500 of the largest enterprises for 3 percent of their real value, and hundreds of billions of rubles have not been received by the treasury either. Now the special preelection month-long campaign in which Yeltsin has pledged to pay budget-sphere workers their wages has exhausted the country's last reserves. So the economy is descending to its primeval level.

In Sosnovyy Bor there is a scientific research institute which comprehensively tests optical and electronic devices and systems. Currently it is in dire straits, the number of personnel has been halved and wages are around 300,000 rubles. But instead of our own government Israeli firms are interested in the institute's achievements. Previously it worked for the defense sector. Currently it still has developments which are unique in the world. Thus it developed a test bench which simulates all aspects of space conditions. This alone it makes it possible to reduce artificial earth satellite launches by 80 percent. There is also great success in the sphere of controlled thermonuclear reactions. But these are prospects. Right now the staff asked Zyuganov to help them obtain money, if only to maintain the 30 scientists working on this problem.

"In our country there are around 700 up-to-the-minute scientific developments. Huge profits would soon be made if funds were invested in them," Zyuganov said after his meeting at the institute. "Instead of this the government is sending crude oil to the West. But export revenue could be doubled just by refining it. Thus $300 billion has escaped over there from our country. It turns out that our country is subsidizing the developed countries' economies. In return we get peanuts. The $10-billion credit obtained will, of course, go not on promising scientific developments but rather on the war in Chechnya."

Zyuganov also visited the Leningrad AES, which uses reactors of the same type as those at the Chernobyl AES. Since then commentators have portrayed these reactors as a model of our country's technical backwardness. But specialists, specifically the Leningrad AES director, believe otherwise: "There is no and can be no safe technology. Chernobyl happened through the fault of those who were sitting at the control panel. As Academician Legasov said: 'Their standards did not match the complexity of the facility being managed.' Safety can be guaranteed only by the people in whose hands this technology is. Politics bears just as much responsibility — because social processes sometime assume the nature of a chain reaction." "The control system must not be broken, it does not matter whether it is that of a reactor or the state, it can only be repaired," Zyuganov remarked in reply.

After the Chernobyl accident the Leningrad AES got the speed of the emergency protection system down to two seconds, but our state still has no emergency system to protect against one person's high-handedness. But here there is for some reason no hurry to borrow Western experience. According to the CPRF leader, the self-government system in Sweden is a 90-percent replica of the Soviet system. There the representative branch is elected at all levels and any official is accountable to it. Moreover, two-thirds of all state taxes go to local budgets. How many problems of both scientific research institutes and the Leningrad AES would be solved at local level under this system!

After the conversation the hospitable hosts invited Zyuganov and his delegation to go into the heart of the nuclear power station. Before entering the "dirty zone" everybody put on white coveralls and helmets and special plastic slippers on their feet, and received dosimeters. Soon everybody was standing in the reactor hall.

At the end there was a meeting with inhabitants. The jam-packed hall of the city's palace of culture could not accommodate everybody and people stood in the foyer and hallways. Hundreds of people for whom there was no room in the building stood in the street, they stood for over two hours listening to their presidential candidate's speech through loudspeakers. Then I thought: Good luck to it, the information blockade! Television might have been well and truly occupied by Yeltsin, who has put another wall — the television screen — between himself and the people. But Yeltsin will never again feel the warmth of so many friendly handshakes nor see so many happy faces around himself.

It is a good thing that people can see the president of the future Russia with their own eyes and in person; this bears no comparison to the image of a dull spot on the screen.

Russia: Polls Show 'Devotion' to Zyuganov

964F1960A Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 16 Apr 96 p 2

[Results of sociological studies by Nugzar Betaneli, director of the Institute of Parliamentary Sociology: "To Catch Up—And Overtake: Chances of Success in Russia's Presidential Election"; first eight paragraphs are introduction by MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS Political Section]

[FBIS Translated Text] If Yeltsin loses in 1996, he himself will not be to blame for it. Like the Prophetic Oleg, he will have received "death" from his own steed—from his many organizers and staffers, or more accurately—from their confidence in victory. We have already seen this happen. Not having any doubts with respect to success in the Duma elections, ministers and administration personnel created "their own" tiny parties either personally or through others—probably in order to support Russia Is Our Home. The result? A fiasco.

Responsibility was then written off to the newspapers and, apparently, the pollsters. They heaped all the blame on them despite one evident fact: In those areas where voters were interested in politics and sociology, it was the definitively non-communist-oriented groupings that "won."

On this occasion, an idea was born astounding in its simplicity and effectiveness: to declare a moratorium on the publication of unfavorable poll results. All the same, we propose here that the reader familiarize himself with the realistic study prepared by Nugzar Betaneli, who predicted the results of the Duma election last December more accurately than other Russian sociologists. We do not agree with all the recommendations of the author—on participation in the election campaign of the president's family, for example.

Nonetheless, we cannot help but focus attention on the conclusions that proceed from the results of this research.

First of all, despite all the rosy accounts given by Comrade Zyuganov, no more than a third of the citizens who intend to vote for him share his communist ideas. The rest simply believe that we can build socialism without robbing everyone in the name of a bright future.

Secondly, the hour of triumph has come for such politicians as Grigoriy Yavlinskiy. It will be fairly difficult to win without their assistance—despite all the strange naivete of their slogans, they are still pretty popular. It is only possible to get "their" votes, however, by bringing them onto the "team," the way Rutskoy was recruited.

The matter is further complicated, however, by unpleasant circumstances. On the one hand, the "third-rate" leaders do not understand that they have at their disposal only an hour of triumph, not a month of triumph or year of triumph. Without joining forces with Yeltsin, they hardly stand a chance of putting their promises into reality. And something must be decided prior to the first round of the election. On the other hand, no one—either in the Kremlin or in the government—wishes to yield his position to a haughty upstart. There are too few places to begin with. In other words, the staffers are acting as though Boris Yeltsin's victory is a foregone conclusion and the time has already come to be concerned about themselves personally. One might say the president's team has its own "collective Yavlinskiy."

Understandably, these people need sociological confirmation to the effect that everything is proceeding in the best possible way. No, not everything—but there is still time to prepare a victory. Although this time it will not be guaranteed, like in 1991 and 1993.

[Signed] MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS Political Section

Not once this year has the Institute of Parliamentary Sociology published any data with assessments and predictions regarding the development of the preelection situation, although of course it has conducted studies. The reason for this is that realizing the full weight of responsibility such predictions entail, we have been extremely careful in reverifying the conclusions, presented for the first time in this publication, basing our report on the results of repeated research.

To this end the Institute of Parliamentary Sociology conducted two public opinion surveys of the Russian Federation populace (1-6 March and 26 March-1 April 1996) on the issue of the Russian Federation presidential election. Each of the studies encompassed 62 Russian Federation entities in all 12 economic regions of the country, including Moscow and St. Petersburg. The survey sample—6,000 respondents for each—reflect all the main sociodemocratic features of the aggregate adult city and rural populations of the Russian Federation.

Can Predictions Be Made in Russia?

Once again Russia is beginning, like a magnet, to attract the attention of the entire world. In excess of 100 million Russian voters are expected to vote 16 June 1996 and choose their "political destiny" for four long years.

The enigma of the Russian soul is troubling to many. Everyone is afraid of making a mistake, failing, or losing reputation. After all, the "black box" of psychology of the Russian voter makes it virtually impossible to make a precise prediction. All the same...

The results of any presidential or parliamentary election depend on two factors—on the political activity and sociopolitical mindset of the populace. As far as activity is concerned, we can expect a fairly high degree of participation by Russian voters in the Russian Federation presidential election on 16 June 1996. The number of Russian citizens intending to participate to one degree or another in the June voting has reached 77 percent (as of the beginning of April). But we know that people's declared intentions do not always coincide with their actual behavior. An analysis of many factors indicates that the number of possible participants in the June election presently does not exceed 67 percent.

It is curious that despite the fact that preelection campaigning has not yet formally begun, the public opinion of a significant portion of Russian voters is already formed. Our survey shows that over the two and a half months remaining until the election, more than a third of all Russian voters (36 percent) "have already decided how they are going to vote on 16 June 1996." For comparison purposes, we recall that from approximately the same "distance"—two and a half months—from the elections to the State Duma (October 1995), the number of voters declaring that they had already made their selection did not exceed 21 percent. The number of Russian voters intending to participate in the June 1996 election who "have determined their political selection" is already reaching 50 percent.

It is clear that the preelection political and sociopsychological situation in the country is just now being formed, so that any theoretically possible development of events might well take place. Indeed, time is required for any definitive formulation of mass sentiment, not to mention public opinion. Despite all this, however, we are able with a sufficient degree of confidence to forecast the possible development of events and the results of the voting by Russian citizens in the 1996 presidential election.

The fact is that the behavior of voters is predetermined to a great extent by their social mindset. Mindset is an unconscious psychological readiness, an individual's predisposition one way or another in perceiving future events and reacting to them. It is not the orientation acknowledged by the individual himself respecting one set of values or another.

Public opinion surveys are interesting in that they permit us not only to study the views and opinions people avow, but they also help us examine the social mindsets that have an influence on perception and conduct. It is this kind of sociopsychological approach, as opposed to the primitive "arithmetic sociology," that allows us to predict the conduct of voters.

The Situation

In order to correctly interpret the social mood, it should be taken into account that the present preelection situation in the country is being formed to a great extent under the political influence of the results of the December 1995 elections. The Russian Federation presidential election is to a certain extent the "second stage" of an integral political process—Russia's choice of its "path." In other words, the election of the Russian Federation president is not so much an individualized, personal question as it is one that connotes global aspects of sociopolitical self-determination. We are all actually selecting not so much one individual or another as much as a political and economic system. We are choosing a "way of life." In this sense the "vector" of mass sentiment is extremely interesting.

It must be noted that the correlation of political potential between the main contenders for the office of Russian Federation president remains virtually unchanged in recent times. The word "potential" is used to denote certain indicators we may apply in judging the sociopolitical mindsets and orientations of the populace that will influence the outcome of the voting in the June election. We recall that these indicators helped the Institute of Parliamentary Sociology predict fairly accurately back in August of 1995, with respect to the election of the Russian Federation State Duma in December 1995, that "22-27 percent of the electorate participating in the voting would cast their ballots in favor of a party of procommunist orientation" (see MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS 1 August 1995).

Two Russia-wide surveys show that even today, for a significant segment of citizens (according to their self-assessment), "the victory of a candidate from a procommunist party is politically and economically more preferable, more advantageous" (26 percent of those polled so indicated). Fewer voters are oriented on the victory of a candidate "from the present authority or its supporters" (13 percent), "from among democrats who are critical of the present authority" (12 percent), "from national-patriots" (3 percent), or from other forces (7 percent).

"As far as your personal interests are concerned, whose victory in the Russian Federation presidential election in June 1996 would be more preferable to you, more advantageous politically and economically?" Responses to this survey question were as follows: "Victory of the candidate from the present Russian authority"—13 percent; "Victory of a candidate belonging to the group of democrats who are critical of the present authority"—12 percent; "Victory of a candidate from among the communists"—26 percent; "Victory of a candidate from the national-patriots"—3 percent; "Victory of a candidate from other forces"—7 percent; "It is all the same to me who wins"—10 percent; "Hard to say"—29 percent.

Based on these and many other data, we can express one entirely evident prediction: that unless the representatives of the present state authority and democratic movement unite in the near future around a single candidate for president of the Russian Federation, a crushing defeat inevitably awaits them.

But even in the event such a unification takes place, the "arithmetic" chances of two opposing blocs, Yeltsin-Zyuganov for example, merely become even, and the outcome of the struggle will depend on the effectiveness of preelection campaigning. At the same time, by virtue of the somewhat amorphous nature of the centrist and democratic movements and the lack of "intra-party" discipline, an appeal from their leaders to vote for B.N. Yeltsin will not be accepted by all "supporters"; consequently, the needed number of votes might not be "delivered" in the first round.

Trends

Analysis of the dynamics of the mass political orientation indicates a definite increase in polarization and a certain growth of the "pro-Yeltsin" and "pro-Zyuganov" sentiment in society. Thus, the total number of Russian voters (regardless of whether or not they will actually go to the polls) intending in June 1996 to vote for Boris Yeltsin increased during March from 8 to 11 percent, those intending to vote for Gennadiy Zyuganov—from 24 to 25 percent.

"Were your political sympathies ever with B.N. Yeltsin?" Responses to this survey question were as follows: "My sympathies have always been and remain with B.N. Yeltsin"—7 percent; "Not previously, but now my sympathies are with B.N. Yeltsin"—4 percent; "My sympathies used to be with B.N. Yeltsin, but now they are not"—45 percent; "My sympathies have never been and are not now with B.N. Yeltsin"—29 percent; "Hard to say"—15 percent.

The degree of public support for certain other candidates has also changed somewhat. Thus for example, the share of people intending to vote for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is 4 percent (formerly 6 percent), Aleksandr Lebed—7 percent (6 percent), Svyatoslav Fedorov—4 percent (3 percent), and Grigoriy Yavlinskiy—8 percent (7 percent).

It is appropriate to say that the intention of voters in and of itself to vote for one political figure or another, and even the standing of a candidate for Russian Federation president, do not have decisive significance. A candidate's chances of victory also depend to a great extent on what proportion of the supporters of each contender will actually turn out at the polls on 16 June 1996.

In general, the preelection situation in the country is fairly complicated and is unfavorable to candidates for the office of Russian Federation president nominated from "the authority" and from various democratic, centrist movements. Despite many published "standings" and "forecasts," the expectation of two rounds of voting and a consolidation, in the final stage, of political forces around Boris Yeltsin as a counterweight to Gennadiy Zyuganov's candidacy may not turn out unjustified. The situation as of early April 1996 shows that Gennadiy Zyuganov continues as before to be capable of amassing from 35 to 47 percent of the votes of the participating Russian electorate in the 16 June 1996 election.

The number of supporters of Boris Yeltsin has risen somewhat recently. According to our prediction, taking the current mass sentiment of voters into account, Yeltsin may receive the support of 16-20 percent of the voting electorate in June 1996. One must admit, however, that this is hardly sufficient for a second-round victory.

The following percentages are possible for certain other participants in the preelection campaigning for president: V.V. Zhirinovskiy—5 percent, A.I. Lebed—7-10 percent, S.N. Fedorov—2-5 percent, G.A. Yavlinskiy—9-12 percent. The remaining candidates have not as yet realized their political potential.

It must be emphasized that the preelection campaign has not yet begun, and it is still too early to draw definitive conclusions regarding the standing of many participants. We can talk about trends in the development of the situation, but no more. Here is why.

First of all, "present" standings are being influenced by the degree of mobilization of supporters of one candidate or another. Today the communist electorate is oriented to a significantly greater degree on active participation in the election than is the electorate of its competitors. But the standing of Gennadiy Zyuganov may begin to fall as the election draws near, since by that time supporters of the "opposition" camps will have carried out an energetic mobilization of "their forces."

Secondly, after registration of the 10-15 candidates is completed by the Russian Federation Central Electoral Commission and preelection campaigning has begun, we will see a certain regrouping of forces take place, a certain redistribution of votes. On the other hand, Russia's electorate has almost grown unaccustomed to having such a "small" list of contenders. The "contrast effect" is therefore possible, where the degree of public attention focused on the leaders of the election race can wane and, in the reverse, attention on "new" names can grow stronger. That is, of course, if they are able to more or less successfully present their preelection propaganda.

Finally, it is useful to take into account the well-known peculiarities of a certain segment of the electorate. Thus, the supporters of V. Zhirinovskiy, like supporters of Le Pen in France, usually do not advertise their sympathies in surveys until the last minute. This then results in an "unexpected" burst of their leader to the finish line.

The Second Round

What will happen if Russian citizens are forced to elect the Russian Federation president from just two candidates—Boris Yeltsin and Gennadiy Zyuganov (first round or second not being important)? What is the potential of political supporters of these candidates in Russian society? Judging from the state of public sentiment, 23 percent of all Russian voters intend to vote for Boris Yeltsin (their own assessment), while 34 percent intend to vote for Gennadiy Zyuganov. Sociopsychological forecasting indicates, however, that Boris Yeltsin might get the vote of 31 percent, and Gennadiy Zyuganov—55 percent of those who actually turn out at the polls. It is clear that this preliminary prediction is based on current trends in public sentiment and does not take into account the possible consequences of a "regrouping" of political forces, the influence of preelection propaganda, and the psychological reaction of voters to a second round.

"If the situation were presented as offering only two candidates for Russian Federation president—B.N. Yeltsin and G.A. Zyuganov, which of them would you vote for?" Responses to this survey question were as follows: "For B.N. Yeltsin"—23 percent; "For G.A. Zyuganov"—34 percent; "I would vote against both candidates"—16 percent; "I would not take part in the election"—9 percent; "Hard to say"—18 percent.

It seems that given the scenario of a second round, all the "noncommunist" parties and even Yeltsin's opponents would be forced to support the candidacy of the current president. Here is why. If he wins, he maintains his chances of renewing a "march on the Kremlin" four years from now. (Although clearly, Boris Yeltsin will not run for a third term, by virtue of constitutional norms and perhaps for personal reasons as well). But if the younger G. Zyuganov accedes to power, the prospect of "replaying" him in four years will be problematic.

It is possible, however, that a decision by the leaders of the noncommunist parties to support Boris Yeltsin in the second round of voting ("to give him their votes") will not strongly influence the conduct of voters. During the course of discussion of all possible "variants" of a union of forces "against Zyuganov," virtually all politicians and analysts are losing sight of an important factor— that Russian voters are not all that easily manipulated. Superficial estimates show that the democratic, noncommunist opponents of Boris Yeltsin will (and this is only natural) first try to show that his policy has failed, that it has brought misfortune and impoverishment to Russia, and that one must vote against him. But then (when they themselves have lost the first round) they will tell the voters: "Hold it! We will vote for the current president." They can say this, and they will. But will the electorate listen to them?

A False Target

One factor in the success or failure of political figures is their preelection campaign, its "focuses," the key symbols. In this sense it is interesting to analyze "fragments" of the Russian Federation president's preelection propaganda that seem to reflect certain "myths" and delusions that have been disseminated. Thus, anticommunism in present-day Russia represents a "false target." It is therefore a mistake to focus on it in the preelection campaign. The fact of the matter is that orientation on a candidate from a pro-communist party, fairly prevalent in our society, in no way entails an orientation of the masses on the communist ideology itself or on socialist structuring in the traditional sense of these concepts. As an analysis of mass expectations shows, the overwhelming majority of Russian citizens, regardless of political predisposition, will require that the future Russian Federation president enhance the standard of living (82 percent), intensify the fight against crime (69 percent), effect a settlement of the situation in Chechnya (59 percent), etc. But at the same time, the idea of a revival of socialism in Russia is not very popular (supported by only 11 percent of the electorate). Moreover, even among those who intend to vote for communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov, only 29 percent believe that the future president should restore a socialist system in Russia. It is precisely for this reason that a "frontal" anticommunist propaganda assault will not reap any appreciable benefit for Boris Yeltsin and his supporters.

"How do you personally view the activity of G.A. Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Federation Communist Party?" Responses to this survey question were as follows: "Very positively, I am an active supporter"—5 percent; "Positively"—18 percent; "With a certain positive interest"—12 percent; "With indifference"—13 percent; "With a certain degree of suspicion"—16 percent; "Negatively"—14 percent; "Sharply negatively, I am an active opponent"—6 percent; "Hard to say"—16 percent.

Weaknesses of the Russian Federation president's election campaign propaganda can be seen in the "rate" of growth of his personal standing. Thus, from December 1995 through 1 March 1996 the total number of citizens who positively evaluate the activity of Russian Federation President B.N. Yeltsin to one degree or another increased from 10 to 16 percent, while during the course of March 1996 it rose from 16 to 17 percent—clearly insufficient to achieve success.

"How do you personally view the activity of Russian Federation President B.N. Yeltsin?" Responses to this survey question were as follows: "Very positively, I am an active supporter"—1 percent; "Positively"—7 percent; "With a certain positive interest"—9 percent; "With indifference"—9 percent; "With a certain degree of suspicion"—17 percent; "Negatively"—38 percent; "Sharply negatively, I am an active opponent"—12 percent; "Hard to say"—7 percent.

Another oblique indicator is the "zone of agreement" of voters with the current Russian Federation president. The preelection campaign shows that that presidential candidate will win whose "picture of the world" coincides to the greatest extent with the views and convictions of the voters, most reflects their interests. But B.N. Yeltsin's capacities here are as yet limited. Only 12 percent of Russians believe that "their position on the basic issues of Russian life coincides with that of B.N. Yeltsin."

Mentality

During the course of preelection campaigning, many candidates for Russian Federation president clearly have failed to take into account particular features of the social psychology of Russian society. Generally speaking, imitation of the standards and models of Western (American) preelection campaigns, without understanding or taking into account the "Russian factors," can seriously undermine the position of any candidate for president. Thus, contrary to the advice of a number of leaders of the Russian mass media and other experts, it is not worth it for Boris Yeltsin or Gennadiy Zyuganov, or any other candidate in fact, to actively bring their family members into the election campaign. Studies show that such a measure would inevitably lead to the "Raisa Maksimovna Gorbacheva effect" and to the consequences of which we are aware. In this regard, neither the personalities of the candidates for Russian Federation president themselves, nor even a positive attitude on the part of voters with respect to their family members, has any effect whatsoever.

We can cite specific examples. A comparative analysis shows that from 57 to 64 percent of Russian voters view "with indifference" or "negatively" the participation of family members of either Gennadiy Zyuganov or Boris Yeltsin in the election campaign.

In this manner, all participants in the election campaign might well heed the advice: "You can put your trust in the Western experience, but don't slip up."

What a marvelous country Russia is! Just 12 percent of the populace desire to return to the communist past, but it turns out from all the sociological surveys that were the election to be held today, the Communist Zyuganov would assume the office of president.

What has occurred in the heads of our fellow countrymen to make them once again allow an overwhelming minority to foist political choices upon them?

First of all, there is the total enfeeblement one-fourth of our mature citizens find themselves in. Some 27 percent of the electorate to this day do not know who they will vote for, or even whether or not they will participate in the voting process. As though we were talking about selecting Russia's finest sausages we would not be able to have anyway. Zyuganov is not just a pretty face—he will use his communist charms to get everyone. Like it or not, you will get to experience the sense of "deep satisfaction," gobble up smelly sausage at 2.20 a piece, and be given an ideological enema once a week at various kinds of assemblies.

If you do not need all this, what kind of garden do you intend to dig for yourself on election day? It is entirely possible that pioneers will be harvesting its crops this autumn.

Secondly, we see the intellectual feebleness into which Russia's intelligentsia has fallen, incapable of grasping even the simplest, elementary concept: Lebed is of course a sharp general; Fedorov—a fine doctor; Yavlinskiy—a remarkable man overall; but if you cast your ballot for them on election day, you will get Zyuganov as a result.

Thirdly, we see the naivete of those voting for the Communists. According to surveys even of the Zyuganov electorate, only one out of every three individuals dreams of living under socialism. The rest probably think that Zyuganov is of Swedish nationality and that his implementation of socialism will be Swedish socialism, i.e., that the rich will share with the poor. But in actuality, there will simply not be any rich people, and those who are absolutely indigent will start taking food from the ordinary poor. Why does it seem that light, water, heat, and food exist of themselves, under any system and any president? In reality, it may take as little as one year to bring the country to the brink of physical hunger. Look at a few of the "fraternal" republics, at the poverty they are enduring today, and perhaps you will then come to understand.

In short, if you act stupidly in the presidential election, the election after that one—through which the situation might be corrected—will simply not ever happen.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Interviewed on Campaign Issues

MM3004155196 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 2

[Interview with Russian presidential candidate Vladimir Zhirinovskiy by Ichiro Taniguchi, Nikolay Tsvetkov, Timofey Kuznetsov, and Mikhail Kushtapin at RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA editorial office; date not given: "Vladimir Zhirinovskiy: 'The President Swears an Oath Not to a Party, But to the People'" — interview is part of "joint action" with Japan's YOMIURI SHIMBUN]

[FBIS Translated Text] [RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Vladimir Volfovich, you are one of the few participants in the current presidential election race with previous experience of this. Please tell us what is the difference between the Zhirinovskiy of 1991 and the Zhirinovskiy of 1996?

[Zhirinovskiy] The disposition of forces among the teams of contenders is very reminiscent of 1991. Yeltsin, Ryzhkov, Zhirinovskiy. And now it is again: Yeltsin, Zyuganov, Zhirinovskiy.

The difference is probably that at that time the Communists were more sympathetic toward me in the battle against Yeltsin. The situation is now the reverse: There are no signals from the Communists about showing solidarity somehow in some respect, but the anti-Zyuganov forces are showing interest in me.

But from my personal viewpoint, of course, these five years have passed very quickly and I have accumulated a great wealth of experience. Throughout these years I have been a deputy, in the Supreme Soviet and twice in the State Duma. I have almost been round the whole world. So I can boldly say that the most experienced party and the most experienced contender are right here today, in your editorial office. And probably the most relaxed contender too, because the other two are in a very tense, shaky situation. So far as they are concerned these elections are their swansong: One has to try to hang on, the other to make a comeback.

So there are very many similarities with 1991, and even more differences.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] You were one of the first politicians in Russia who was not afraid to put forward the national patriotic idea as his party's banner.

[Zhirinovskiy] That is not because I am cleverer or more perspicacious than anyone. It is the story of my life. I was born in a national region. I left Kazakhstan 32 years ago for national reasons: There was discrimination against Russians, and privileges went only to Kazakhs. Out of all possible political leaders I was better aware of this problem than anyone.

Many democrats in Moscow did not understand this, they decided that this was fascism or something. But it was a question of just one thing: defending Russians and preventing national discrimination. Today everyone has seen the millions of Russian refugees.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Russia has always been a multinational country. How, in your view, should nationalities problems be resolved?

[Zhirinovskiy] We must remove the nationalities question. If it is constantly ignored, if the nationalities card is played, the same fate as the USSR lies in store for the Russian Federation. The Union shattered into 15 states. Russia would split into at least 20. After all, we have even more autonomous regions. So we need to switch to a territorial [administrative] division, to unity of citizenship. You are a citizen of Russia — and that is all! The whole problem! We have to remove the "nationality" category. After all, it's artificial. It doesn't exist anywhere in the world. Take France or Turkey. Everywhere it says: "Citizenship." The word "nationality" does not feature in any country of the world.

An unpleasant fate lies in store for Russia if we grant special status to Tatarstan, Chechnya, or other republics.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] What do you think will happen if Yeltsin does not make it into the second round?

[Zhirinovskiy] I don't think they would allow that. If the Kremlin reckons that Yeltsin is sure to get into the second round alongside those who would not dispute his victory during the final lap, then the elections will run their full course. If they see that this is totally unrealistic, then I think the elections will probably be postponed on various pretexts. That is my scenario for developments in the immediate future.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] What could be the pretext for canceling or postponing the elections?

[Zhirinovskiy] Above all, terrorist acts in certain cities in the country. Suppose some actions start in May: People are unhappy with being poor and hungry. Refugees. There could be acts of violence somewhere or other. Not necessarily by the people, but acts provoked by certain forces in order to provide a pretext for introducing a state of emergency and then postponing the elections until next fall or the spring of 1997.

They could replace the government chairman and entrust the new premier with the duty of imposing strict order in the country. This would naturally cause dissatisfaction in a number of national regions. That is a different scenario. But once again there would be a state of emergency. There are many possibilities. In all cases the president and his team would retain power. The various scenarios could be brought into play literally in the next few days, once the candidates are totally clear.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Whom among the presidential contenders do you find sympathetic and who is closest to you in their views? With whom could you form an alliance?

[Zhirinovskiy] You know, with absolutely no one. Yeltsin is surrounded by a fifth column. It hampers and controls him — these are his closest aides and a number of other advisers and staffers. Zyuganov is a purely ideological trend: the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation], the ideas of communism, and so forth. Yavlinskiy is a new fifth column fed from abroad. It is even worse than Gorbachev. There was at least some patriotic element in that. Fedorov the opthalmologist? How could that be possible — he's a doctor, an eye specialist, eye microsurgery, such a narrow specialist — how could he run the country?

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Are you being approached by people from the Kremlin or the democrats?

[Zhirinovskiy] There have been no direct approaches. But I am aware of certain scenarios. There are middlemen who report certain sentiments in the Kremlin, and willy-nilly some talks and probing of possible positions and actions take place. I am not being totally shunned. They used to do their utmost to squeeze me out and slander and defame me. But now, sensing the danger of the Communists, the Kremlin has begun to treat me more gently and fairly. Not because they are showing any sympathy toward me, but because the CPRF is more of a danger to them.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Don't you think that Russia's relations with Japan have been stagnant in recent years?

[Zhirinovskiy] Everything runs up against the territorial claims. We must tell the truth about the Kuril islands. They are not merely rocky island — there are huge quantities of fish there. If we hand over the islands we will be handing over the fish, because Japanese fishermen will take the whole catch for themselves.

There are reports that there could be large amounts of gas there. And also oil. This is a region where oil and gas reserves are bigger than in the Near East.

Furthermore, it is a strategic outlet for our Navy. So to hand over these islands would be to lose an outlet to the Pacific Ocean. These would be very great economic and strategic losses.

But it is entirely possible to reach agreement with the Japanese. We can supply, provide, and make what they need without any military confrontation. An alliance with Germany and Japan, with whom we fought, would be to our advantage. If we had a proper Berlin-Moscow-Tokyo axis the world would be a calmer place. It would be a powerful axis of three states. But unfortunately fascism, communism, and also extreme nationalism in Japan before 1945 — all this led to the destruction of the three states. Japan was occupied, Germany and Russia were destroyed. And the winner is America: It is in Japan and Germany, and is moving into Russia. If we three states realize who our enemy is and unite our efforts, we will also be able to reach agreement on territories. But today the plain version — just territory — will not work.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Right from the start each presidential contender will certainly have to concern himself with the team that will support him in his first steps in the event of victory.

[Zhirinovskiy] I have got a team, of course. There have been two intakes of deputies, and people have accumulated experience. The average age is 35-40, these are very mature people. But we have no intention of making sweeping changes to the people working in ministries, committees, and editorial offices. It is a question of replacing a few ministers and certain individuals. The specialists and professionals will keep their jobs. Our country has the most experienced team that has passed through all the political storms and all the versions of economic reform.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Won't the result be that, instead of the CPSU monopoly, which ended in 1991, there will be an LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] monopoly if you win? And 20 million functionaries at all levels will line up for party cards?

[Zhirinovskiy] We won't make them stand in line — we will immediately hand out party cards to everyone. Then we will assess who joined when. I am joking. We have no intention of luring people into the party. The country's president acts in the name of the people. Party democracy is finished so far as he is concerned. In parliament we are the LDPR faction, you cannot lose touch, that would not be understood. But the president discharges his duties in isolation from the party. He swears an oath not to the party, but to the people. We are not going to repeat the bitter experience of the CPSU.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Who among current politicians has prospects for the future?

[Zhirinovskiy] A very difficult question. All politicians are either corrupt or linked with the past. Almost all of them except me are former CPSU members. That Yavlinskiy, as soon as Zyuganov collected lots of votes in the elections, tells him: "Gennadiy Andreyevich, I was a member of the CPSU for three years, and my father was a Communist." And what about the democrats? As soon as the situation shifted to the left they began to try to ingratiate themselves: What if the Communists make a comeback? They are a bunch of turncoats and cowards. That is their problem. So there are no real ones. Lebed too is of the same breed. In 1991 he betrayed the SCSE [State Committee for the State of Emergency] and refused to blockade the White House. In the Dniester region he almost handed Smirnov over to the Moldovan secret police. Anpilov has stooped too low. The military do not count. Popov could certainly have achieved something, but he grabbed a fat slice and is digesting it. He is in no mood for a fight. Rybkin is too quiet, but he is quick on his feet. How long can you go on running?! How can you keep up with him when he has already changed parties four times?!

So it is hard to find any figure on an all-Russian scale who evokes real sympathy. They appear and fizzle out — they are no longer visible. Astafyev started something with the Constitutional Democrats, then fizzled out. Skokov too, a Communist, rose to great heights then vanished into the shadows, tried again to do something and again vanished. Our politicians are very slippery customers. If I were not me but, so to speak, an outsider I would say of myself: He takes a firm and clear stand, everybody attacks him, but he defends his line. But I cannot praise myself. The rest, unfortunately, are slippery customers.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Campaigns in Krasnodar 'Stronghold'

LD3004214496 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Video report from Krasnodar by unidentified correspondent, including recordings of remarks by Russian presidential candidate Vladimir Zhirinovskiy at news conference — from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] This is Krasnodar, where Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR], arrived this afternoon was his last stopover in his preelection tour of the North Caucasus. His program in Kuban — Zhirinovskiy arrived in Krasnodar from Armavir — was quite traditional: meetings with the party aktiv, a brief news conference, a one-hour live television speech, and finally a meeting.

The leader of the LDPR regards Krasnodar Territory as his stronghold in the south of Russia. His positions here are traditionally strong. In the last parliamentary elections, the LDPR received more than 300,000 votes, coming second only to the communists. In the 1993 elections, the Zhirinovskiy party led here, having received one quarter of all the votes. So, Vladimir Volfovich has quite a few people to rely on in the Kuban. That is probably why he was not trying too hard this time. He proceeded without trying to shock the public. He made no sensational statements, though he did say at the news conference:

[Zhirinovskiy] We are in favor of socialism. Society must be for everybody.

[Correspondent] Incidentally, Zhirinovskiy displayed great dislike for the communists, but was softer toward Yeltsin. He did not shy away from making forecasts.

[Zhirinovskiy] The situation such as Yeltsin and Zyuganov getting into the second round will not happen.

[Correspondent] At the same time he said with conviction that he will be the one to fight Zyuganov in the second round. [video shows Zhirinovskiy speaking at rallies and meetings, holding news conference]

Russia: Gorbachev Recalls Omsk Trip, Discusses Election Issues

LD3004201596 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1608 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Summary] This station broadcasts a 35-minute live studio interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, former general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and first president of the USSR, conducted by an unidentified interviewer. Gorbachev says that communists heckled him during his recent trip to Siberia. "I do not altogether suppose that Russia may hand its destiny on a plate to Zyuganov's team," Gorbachev says, quoting his own remark at an election meeting in Kemerovo on 22 April which, he notes, so incensed the communists.

Gorbachev recalls an attempt on his life in Omsk on 24 April and describes the attempted blow aimed at the base of his skull and deflected by a bodyguard as a professional attempt by someone who may have had paratroop training. "Such people must be dealt with resolutely," he says. "It was a thought-through operation," and others were beginning to come to the aid of the would-be assassin, says Gorbachev, without going into details. Police were nowhere to be seen, and Gorbachev says he was later told by officials that his security could not be guaranteed. Those attending the meeting applauded his rejection of the present team in power but heckled him when Gorbachev rejected the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its leader Gennadiy Zyuganov as unfit to replace Boris Yeltsin's team. The heckling grew when he criticized the communist party as "unreconstructed" and said that the communist hecklers' behavior "disqualified" the party from taking office.

Gorbachev speaks in complimentary terms about Aleksandr Lebed, Svyatoslav Fedorov, and Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, but denies that he has had any talks with them with a view to joining forces. The Russian government should play a bigger role and as for the president, "we do not need a czar, but we must preserve this post and its incumbent ought to be a strong man," Gorbachev says.

Replying to a question on how he would cope with a communist-dominated Duma, if elected, Gorbachev says: "If I am elected president — and I will strive for it — I will do everything to ensure that the Duma works until the end of its term in office, because real people are to be found behind the communists, people who express through the communists their dissatisfaction with what is happening to them and to the country. This must not be ignored if we wish to unite rather than fragment ourselves and come ever closer to confrontation, as it were. I see my mission as unification and I would do everything to work with this Duma and I would get them involved in my brigade, as it were, in my team, their representatives would be included." Professional, rather than ideological considerations must be paramount when the new ruling team is appointed.

Gorbachev says he sympathizes with the recent appeal by bankers and industrialists to Boris Yeltsin and Gennadiy Zyuganov to seek compromise, but disagrees with their approach, which seems to indicate that the outcome of the elections is somehow predetermined without any reference to the ordinary voters of Russia. He calls this "the oligarchy wanting to make a deal with the pretenders."

Gorbachev replied to listeners who telephone the station with their questions. He says he condemned the war in Chechnya right from the very start and recalls his opposition to the introduction of troops into Chechnya. Throughout the war he has offered his services as mediator and called for talks and negotiations. The war must be ended and a political settlement must be found. Gorbachev recalls his experience in ending the Afghan war which, he says, claimed just over 14,000 lives, whereas the Chechen war tally is already between 50,000 and 70,000 dead. He says 17 trillion rubles are spent annually on education from the budget, but 16 billion are to be spent on the restoration work in Chechnya this year alone.

Gorbachev takes a gloomy view of the country's economic and industrial performance and says his proposals to put things to rights will be featured in his program, due to be published in mid-May in the form of a pamphlet and hopefully by the press too.

Concluding his interview, Gorbachev appeals to the voters to be guided by their conscience in their choice in the June presidential elections.

Russia: Minor Candidates' Likely Election Role Seen

MM3004101996 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 27 Apr 96 pp 1-2

[Article by Konstantin Molchanov: "...And the Other Contenders. How Their Participation in the Elections Will Affect the Main Rivals' Chances"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As 16 June approaches, the attention of the public and the press is focused increasingly on the two candidates whom everyone regards as the main contenders — Zyuganov and Yeltsin (primarily Yeltsin, of course, but that is because of propaganda expenditure). The "second-echelon" candidates — Yavlinskiy, Zhirinovskiy, Lebed — are mentioned in passing, for form's sake.... Nobody, apparently, admits any likelihood of any of them reaching the second round, still less winning the elections. As for all the other contenders, Gorbachev included, their only role at all is as a kind of "stage set" for the election campaign, the background against which the main action is played out.

So why, one might wonder, are they needed at all, these candidates who are patently no-hopers? Why waste money and time on them if the future of the presidency is in any case going to be decided in single combat between the two strongest? In fact, it is not all as simple as it seems. The "third" candidates are needed, indeed very much needed. And if they did not exist it would be necessary to invent them. Just imagine for a moment that the Central Electoral Commission were to register just those two — Zyuganov and Yeltsin. How many discontented people would immediately appear, not only among politicians, but among voters too! Everyone would start demanding, seeking, and calling out the name of some "third" person, and the attention of the most politicized section of society would be focused on this supposed, mythical candidate and not the real ones.

But, thank heaven, we do have "third" candidates, and indeed in large numbers. And this guarantees one thing: Voter turnout will be quite high. A list of 8-10 names enables the voter to make a choice to his taste — from the heart, so to speak. In this sense the "third" candidates play the part of a kind of "vent" or "safety valve" for some of the electorate. But in the second round, you will say, will we not arrive back where we started — with that same pair of main candidates? Yes, but that is a very different matter. This, if you like, is where daring comes into play. You are testing it out, taking risks, you cannot know the result for sure (what if?), but you back your favorite "horse" and — you find it's lost. Your political idol does not, alas, have sufficient support in society. It is all honorable: He is out of the game not because he was not allowed in in the first place, not because of anyone's intrigues, but for a perfectly objective reason — he did not get the votes. The voter is forced to reconcile himself to the defeat of his favorite, who has gone out in the semifinal. Steam has been let off, there is nobody to blame. It remains to be decided who to back in the final, because the excitement of the game has swept you up by now and how it ends is not a matter of indifference to you.

The "third" candidates' electorate is not simply an additional pool for the main rivals in the second round, it could play a decisive role, but it is very difficult to calculate how many votes will go to whom. Polls show that all these candidates' voters are divided, after the first round, into three main groups: One intends to vote for Yeltsin, another for Zyuganov, and the third to vote against both of them. The mobilization of this pool will depend not so much on the farewell instructions that a particular candidate gives his voters, as on the individual political, social, and moral orientation of each individual voter. One person may see Yavlinskiy as a democrat, another primarily as Yeltsin's opponent, hence his behavior in the second round of voting.

In general the "second-echelon" candidates — each in his own way — **highlight** the main contenders. Yavlinskiy, for instance, as a "democrat with a human face," highlights Yeltsin's shortcomings, makes them more prominent. Lebed, as a candidate of — in conventional terms — patriotic orientation, makes Zyuganov's merits more obvious, highlights them, because he himself lacks sufficient knowledge, experience, and political culture. Zhirinovskiy, in turn, highlights all of them at once. Seen against him, any other candidate seems preferable.

Finally, when we talk about the "second-echelon" candidates, can we totally rule out the possibility that one of them will end up reaching the second round? While Zyuganov's chances are in no doubt — the December election results, his present rating, and the very logic of the developing sociopolitical process in Russia all speak for them — Yeltsin's chances are thus far founded only on loud propaganda. But what if he collects fewer votes than Yavlinskiy or Zhirinovskiy? Let us recall that quite recently, in January-February, he was fifth on the list of contenders, yielding to all the abovementioned "second-echelon" candidates. This indicator reflected the voters' true, unmanipulated attitude to the incumbent president. After that the election campaign began; in effect, the mighty propaganda machine was started up, the brainwashing of voters began on a mass scale, and the "ratings" machine sprang into action. In the blink of an eye, Yeltsin was already prominent in second place on the list. Closer to the elections, he will probably be raised to the top place.

But what if all this is not in accordance with reality? If there is a repetition of what happened in the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary campaigns? Then too they assured us that Gaydar's "Russia's Choice" and Chernomyrdin's "Russia Is Our Home" were ahead of everyone in the ratings. And how did it turn out? In the first case the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] won, in the second the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation].

So why not assume that it is not Yeltsin, but someone else who reaches the second round along with Zyuganov? Who could it be?

Yavlinskiy

Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's supreme task in these elections is precisely to pass Yeltsin in the first round and get into the second round instead of him for the decisive battle with Zyuganov. The first round is actually the more important, the more fundamental for him: Here it will become clear whom the Russian democrats regard as their leader today — Yeltsin, who has in effect betrayed the ideals of both communism and democracy, or Yavlinskiy, who is true to democratic ideals. The second round will be easier for Yavlinskiy, since Yeltsin's entire electorate will vote for him automatically, they will be forced to do so. But also, Yavlinskiy does not have as many enemies as Yeltsin. Objectively speaking, his chances in the second round, as the democrats' sole candidate, are far higher than Yeltsin's, and it is only the latter's personal ambitions and the interests of his immediate entourage that have not allowed the democratic public to make an unequivocal choice in favor of Yavlinskiy. The democrats' electorate is split.

It must be admitted that Zyuganov would find Yavlinskiy rather more difficult to beat than Yeltsin, since he is not such an objectionable figure as the incumbent president. The whole question is how Yavlinskiy is to reach the second round.

He will, of course, take votes not from Zyuganov, but from Yeltsin, first and foremost among the intelligentsia. It is Yavlinskiy who is the sole figure capable of playing the part of understudy to Yeltsin, if something unforeseen happens to him in the remaining time (another heart attack, for instance). Or if at the last, decisive moment something extraordinary happens in the country (another act of terrorism like those in Budennovsk and Kizlyar, only with even graver consequences). God grant that nothing bad happens, but nobody is immune, and a situation in which Yeltsin is forced, literally or figuratively, to drop out of the race cannot be ruled out in theory. And Chernomyrdin was not allowed into the elections. So then Yavlinskiy gets the "green light" for the second round.

But if nothing out of the ordinary happens either to Yeltsin or the country, then Yavlinskiy's success will depend on himself alone, on how he manages to conduct his election campaign. His present rating — 9-10 percent (the VTsIOM [All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion] figure for April) — is quite plausible, since it is close to what the December 1995 elections showed. This is his launch capital, but only now, at the end of April, is he beginning the campaign that could bring him additional points. Here Yavlinskiy himself makes it clear that he has some surprises in store for voters and that his campaign will not be a traditional one, not like Yeltsin's and Zyuganov's.

Well, we shall see. Will he gamble on young people — the most untouched section of the electorate? Will he go to every nook and cranny of Russia where no presidential candidate has ever yet set foot? We shall see.

But, as I understand it, Yavlinskiy has not only a maximum program (to reach the second round, and if not to win it, which would be too arrogant on his part, then to declare himself the second most popular politician in Russia), but also a minimum program. In a recent "Itogi" interview he let fall something about the possibility of concluding an "unexpected alliance." What would that mean? If what is meant is an alliance with Lebed and Sv. Fedorov, there is nothing unexpected about that — on the contrary, the expectations have been too prolonged, and interest in the promised "third force" has gone cold. Yavlinskiy will make such an alliance only on one condition — that his partners drop their own candidacies in his favor. Lebed and Fedorov are still keeping things dark, waiting to see what the ratings show, and their ratings are almost identical (Fedorov's are a little lower). The impression is that in actual fact neither of them really wants this alliance. Strictly speaking, the voters do not want it either.

I think Yavlinskiy, in talking of an "unexpected alliance," had something else in mind. Could he himself in the event of a distribution of forces that is patently unfavorable to him, enter into an alliance with one of the main candidates and agree to the number two role? People have been talking for a long time about the possibility of his reaching a preelection accord with Yeltsin. Yavlinskiy does not reject the idea as such, but with reservations: if the president stops the war in Chechnya, if he adjusts the economic course, etc. What is not said, but is implied, is: if he appoints him premier and grants him broad powers. Is this maneuver a realistic possibility?

First, Yeltsin does not recognize ultimatums; the most recent example is Gaydar, who forced his way in with approximately the same "conditions," after which he disappeared entirely from the public gaze. Second, Yeltsin is not yet ready today to resolve the Chernomyrdin question, which would undermine his position in nomenklatura circles. And how can you promise anyone anything when there is still an existing premier? Third, Yavlinskiy himself, in resolving on such a step, would have to be absolutely confident of Yeltsin's victory over Zyuganov. However, he has recently stated publicly on more than once occasion: "Boris Nikolayevich will not be able to beat Gennadiy Andreyevich in the second round, it is impossible." And if that is so, any discussions or speculation about such an alliance are groundless.

So what kind of "unexpected alliance" is Grigoriy Alekseyevich hinting at? Surely not.... Why not? Even that is possible. Anything is possible. If it becomes absolutely clear by the end of May that Zyuganov has the advantage, I certainly do not rule out that Yavlinskiy could take a step that, it is true, nobody expects of him: for instance, announcing that he is joining the coalition of people's patriotic forces. Plenty of explanations for this could be invented — from "if that is the people's choice, one must be with one's people," to the argument that since a victory for left-wing forces in the elections is inevitable, he, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, is throwing his weight into the breach in order to try, by operating "on enemy territory," to preserve market principles in the economy as far as possible. He will even be considered a hero for it!

Incidentally, the idea of a coalition government was first proposed — a long time ago, too — by the Communists. But since then the situation has changed considerably in their favor, and now they have the right to choose with whom to enter into a coalition and whether to enter one at all.

Zhirinovskiy

In talking about Zhirinovskiy it must be borne in mind that we constantly underestimate and understate his chances in the elections, and then we are surprised: And so we should be, nobody was expecting it! That is how it was in 1991 at the first Russian presidential election, when the totally unknown pretender suddenly reached third place after Yeltsin and Ryzhkov. It was the same in the Duma elections of 1993 and 1995, when the LDPR came first, then second, in the voting on party lists, although beforehand everyone (including the author of these lines) had asserted with one voice that Zhirinovskiy was losing his electorate and the peak of his popularity had passed.

Remembering all this, I am afraid of making over-pessimistic predictions with regard to this politician. Heaven knows what surprise he may still spring on us all — what if he outdistances Yeltsin and Yavlinskiy and reaches the second round?

But it is in the second round that the situation changes dramatically for the worse, for him. According to all the polls, the other candidates' electorate is not, in effect, amenable to switching to Zhirinovskiy. That is to say, whatever the situation, he will not pick up the votes of Yavlinskiy's voters, nor Yeltsin's, etc. In both the first and second rounds he can count on the self-same, strictly LDPR electorate, and no more.

For Gennadiy Zyuganov, the scenario of a choice between him and Zhirinovskiy in the second round holds no terrors in itself. On the contrary, he will find the LDPR leader easier to beat than any other candidate. But the "Zyuganov-Zhirinovskiy" scenario is bad from another viewpoint. It is so unacceptable to voters of a democratic orientation (both candidates are alien to them) that their very participation in voting is called into question. There will be a dramatic increase in the number of people who will not turn out for the second round or will vote against both. And, under the law on presidential elections, if the number of votes cast **against** both candidates exceeds the total number of votes cast **for** them, the president is deemed not to have been elected, even if he has beaten his rival by a large margin.

In March, data were published from a poll carried out by the Russian Independent Institute of Social and National Problems according to which, in the event of Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy reaching the second round, 33.6 percent would vote for the former and 11.2 percent for the latter, but 47.1 percent would vote against both of them (the VTsIOM gives a much lower indicator in April — 30 percent). With the "Yeltsin-Zhirinovskiy" scenario the situation is even worse: 28.5 percent for Yeltsin, 13.9 percent for Zhirinovskiy, but 49 percent against both (VTsIOM does not give the corresponding figures).

So it is highly disadvantageous for either Yeltsin or Zyuganov to be paired with Zhirinovskiy in the second round. According to the same poll, Yavlinskiy would have more success in beating him in the second round (by 42 percent to 13 percent, with 37 percent against), as would Sv. Fedorov (by 38 percent to 13 percent, with 41 percent against). However, it is difficult even theoretically to imagine pairings like Yavlinskiy-Zhirinovskiy or Fedorov-Zhirinovskiy in the second round; for this to happen, the main contenders, Zyuganov and Yeltsin, would simply have to abandon the game.

So Zhirinovskiy personally has no chance of victory in the second round, since other than his "very own" 10-13 percent, he, unlike Yavlinskiy, has no additional resources. But he could severely damage the position of others. In the first round he is a danger to Yeltsin, in the second he is a nuisance to Zyuganov.

It remains to be hoped that at least one of two people — Yeltsin or Yavlinskiy — is able to outrun him in the first round. But, I repeat, more than once before Zhirinovskiy has confounded all hopes and calculations. So it would be more prudent to reach agreement with him before the elections, especially since Vladimir Volfovich is not afflicted like others with intellectual complexes, and declares openly that it is necessary to bargain. Of course, he dreams of being in the service of the state, if only at ministerial rank. That is, after all, a "bird in the hand." And if Yeltsin were to offer him a ministerial post right now, he would probably agree to it, after a little bargaining.

But Yeltsin clearly underestimates the threat to himself personally from Zhirinovskiy, and apparently does not intend to enter into talks with him or with Yavlinskiy. Zhirinovskiy, in turn, seeing no response to his hints, stated recently that he will not enter into any talks with this regime. That statement could mean a more vigorous form of the same hint, or else a recognition that Yeltsin has no chance of victory and that consequently there is nothing really to discuss with him.

But it can be said unequivocally that talks with Zyuganov are impossible in principle. Even if Zhirinovskiy started making declarations of love for the Communists tomorrow. An alliance with such a man and politician would only compromise Zyuganov in the eyes of the voters. But the main point is that he does not need it. The LDPR's electorate is much closer to the CPRF's electorate than their two leaders are to one another. The mood of both sets of voters is based on acute dissatisfaction with the Yeltsin regime. And if Zhirinovskiy goes out in the first round, a significant proportion of his voters will switch to Zyuganov of their own accord, without any agreements at the level of the leaders. Although, of course, this is a more specific electorate, peopled, among others, by those who hold anticommunist views.

According to the VTsIOM figures, at the beginning of April 20 percent of the LDPR's electorate were prepared to vote for Yeltsin in the second round, 30 percent for Zyuganov, and 40 percent against both of them. This 40 percent of Zhirinovskiy's electorate is the group of voters (approximately 3 million people) who are most loyal to him, who want him personally or no one. The other half are prepared to compromise.

Lebed

Aleksandr Lebed remains the least well understood presidential candidate in the sense that to this day it is hard to understand what political views he actually holds and what he is actually taking into the elections. His frequent flights from one political grouping to another have completely confused the voters.

The latest VTsIOM poll shows that Lebed's rating at the end of April is equal to Yavlinskiy's rating: Both are on 10 percent, a little higher than Zhirinovskiy and Sv. Fedorov, both of whom are on 8 percent.

Does this mean that Lebed could outrun them in the first round and even has a chance of reaching the second? I think not. He has the most ill-defined and unstable electorate, which is ready at any moment to swing in another direction — to Yavlinskiy, to Fedorov, to say nothing of Zhirinovskiy and Zyuganov. Lebed's electorate is "floating," not really attached to him personally. It will all depend on whose names are left on the final list. If so-and-so, so-and-so, and so-and-so are not there, then Lebed probably has a chance of success. But if everyone is on the ballot paper, he can expect, in my view, to come fourth or fifth at best.

Aleksandr Ivanovich himself maintains a soldierly jauntiness and of course makes statements like: "I was taught to win, and I am going into the elections to win." But all the candidates say that — Yeltsin, Yavlinskiy, even Gorbachev. Zyuganov alone does not speak out directly about this, and he is right. But in any case not everyone can win, only one president is needed. And if even Yavlinskiy does not rule out certain accords with a stronger rival, for Lebed this is only right and proper.

There has long been a widespread view among the people that he should have been appointed defense minister. That is "right up his street," so to speak. Lebed's candidacy for the post of head of the military department is multipurpose, in the sense that it could be used with equal success both by the incumbent President Yeltsin (before 16 June) and by the potential president Zyuganov (after that date). A rare, if not unique, coincidence.

Judging by recent events, right now in Chechnya a new phase of the war, as yet understood by no one, is beginning. Will it gradually die out, or flare up with renewed force? It was at just that stage in events that General Lebed appeared in the Dniester Region on a previous occasion. So why not put the cards into his hands, at long last? Why not make use of his experience? After all, it is clear that the one who starts a war always has terrible difficulty finishing it. That needs fresh people who are not burdened down by the weight of losses, failures, and responsibility.

That would, incidentally, also be extremely important for Lebed's own political future. If he was able to accomplish this mission — to end the war and restore peace in Chechnya — he would become the most popular person and general in Russia. Going into the presidential contest with that baggage is a very different matter. Maybe he himself should show more commitment to this question?

As for the suggested alliance between Lebed and Yavlinskiy, that is, after all, artificial. The situation as it has turned out is that, having broken with the familiar world of military service and entered the political stage, Lebed finds himself in isolation and even, so to speak, superfluous, a hindrance to others. And that is only natural: First, all the political niches were occupied long ago, and, second, you cannot just come out of nowhere and go straight to the presidency. Yeltsin has the nomenklatura behind him, Zyuganov has a broad people's patriotic bloc (and in principle Lebed's real place is there, but he has not realized it), and Yavlinskiy has the vestiges of the democratic public. Lebed has nobody behind him. And that is the main thing that makes it impossible to predict success for him in the first round even given a relatively high personal rating.

Gorbachev

Gorbachev cannot be spoken of as a "second-echelon" candidate. He is a rank outsider in the presidential race whose rating does not rise above 1 percent. But the very fact of his participation in these elections is curious; one longs to know: Why? Why does he need all this — trouble, humiliation, and in the end inevitable defeat?

I don't know, I don't understand it. It is one of two things: Either he is so incapable of properly assessing the situation (and that would explain much in our recent past), or else he does not care about the result, he is doing it for the sake of the process. For him, who has now been more or less excluded for five years from real politics, the very possibility of traveling around the country on a legitimate basis, on equal terms with others (with Yeltsin), meeting with people, appearing on television, and giving press conferences means a lot. To plunge one last time into his native element....

At the same time, a perfectly rational calculation can be perceived in Gorbachev's actions and statements. From the outset he has called for the unification of all democratic forces, clearly implying that only he himself can be their single, all-reconciling leader. If the worst comes to the worst he would apparently be prepared for Yavlinskiy to become the single candidate, provided Gorbachev was openly behind him. In the event of success he would invent some post for himself under the young president that would befit his "services."

But nobody has responded yet. Nobody wants to link himself to Gorbachev, it is like hanging a millstone around your neck. So his unification with the democrats is hardly likely to happen.

Launching his election campaign, Gorbachev has publicly dissociated himself from the Communists and is constantly making statements in the spirit that you cannot trust the Communist Party in power. Greater cynicism and immorality is inconceivable. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black! The former CPSU Central Committee general secretary warning voters against supporting the Communist Party! This man has neither shame nor conscience. Luckily, the voters realize it.

But could Gorbachev's participation in the first round have some effect on its results? Yavlinskiy is going to suffer most, since they have basically the same electorate; he is not going to take many votes away from him, of course, but after all, even one-tenth of a percent is precious to him. For Yeltsin, the very proximity of the name of Gorbachev (and the ballot paper will open with these two names if it is in alphabetical order) casts an additional shadow on him. These two are together in the people's consciousness as figures identically guilty before the people and the Fatherland. But whereas the full absurdity and iniquitousness of Gorbachev's claims to the top post in the state second time around are clear to absolutely everyone, with regard to Yeltsin this is not so obvious to a certain section of society. These people, driven crazy by propaganda and inflated fears, seriously believe that Yeltsin, unlike Gorbachev, is still capable of running the country and even leading it out of the crisis. This is, of course, a tragic misconception. In fact there is no difference at all between these two figures from our receding past. Both have equally shot their bolt.

As for Zyuganov, Gorbachev's participation in the elections will not shake his position at all, in fact it is more likely to do the opposite and strengthen it. The more actively Mikhail Sergeyevich campaigns against the Communist Party, the more the ordinary voters will trust it and the more obvious it becomes that Zyuganov has nothing in common with the last general secretary of the CPSU, who proved a traitor to it.

...And the Rest

Svyatoslav Fedorov, judging by his recent statement, will withdraw his candidacy in the end — perhaps in Yavlinskiy's favor, perhaps in Lebed's. If this noble act takes place it will probably be the sole example of political selflessness in the camp of Zyuganov's rivals. Among the left, however, such examples are not a rarity, and reflect the strategy of an integrated presidential campaign. Widely known politicians have already withdrawn their candidacies in favor of a single candidate from the people's patriotic opposition. And that only strengthens their prestige and popularity among the people.

There is no point in discussing the other contenders in detail. Madame Starovoytova, who has decided to set a precedent of female participation in the presidential elections, fails to take account of one simple thing — that the woman must be outstanding in this respect and sympathetic in every respect. The much-publicized Bryntsalov is an even more repellent product of economic freedom than Zhirinovskiy is of political freedom. He, like Martin Shakkum, wants only one thing: to be famous in Russia and worldwide. They have achieved it. The rest is of no importance.

...This article has constantly referred to a second round of voting. But that might not happen at all. The scenario whereby one participant would secure an unconditional victory even in the first round is very probable. None of the "second-echelon" candidates has that possibility, of course. Nor does Yeltsin, who has to make great efforts even to reach the second round. The only one who could win on the first vote is Zyuganov, who even today has the support of one-third of the voters who intend to take part in the vote. But for a victory in the first round it is necessary to obtain more than half their votes. He still has work to do to achieve that. It is necessary to add to the 22 million firm Zyuganov supporters another 10-11 million firm Yeltsin opponents. But there are far more of them than that in Russia!

Russia: Left Offering 'Leninist NEP for the Nineties'

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[Article by (Communist Party of the Russian Federation leadership member) Viktor Zorkaltsev: "Saving Russia. A Realistic Alternative Economic Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of questions must be answered if we are to have a clearer picture of the CPRF's [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] domestic and foreign policy. Here are some of them. First, was V. Lenin a communist when he supported Kerensky in the struggle against Kornilov? Was V. Lenin a communist when he traded territory for time and signed the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk? Was V. Lenin a communist when he prepared the revolution as a social democrat, carried it out as a Bolshevik, and adopted the Socialist Revolutionaries' slogans in the Decree on Land? Was V. Lenin a communist when he made four economic policy U-turns in two and a half years: from War Communism to food requisitioning, to the food tax, to the New Economic Policy [NEP] and private ownership (ownership supported by hired labor)? Was V. Lenin a communist when he entrusted the creation of the first product of the planned economy — the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia — to people who did not grasp communism or understand Soviet power? And finally, was V. Lenin a communist when he sharply criticized world imperialism but at the same time sent the aristocrat Chicherin to Genoa to fight for the recognition of the young Soviet republic and the dispatch to Russia of resources, machine tools, equipment, specialists, and aid to the starving Volga region?

Second, was I. Stalin a communist when he sat at the negotiating table and established quite respectful relations with Churchill, a man who not only fiercely hated communist and Soviet power but all things Russian? Was I. Stalin a communist when he allowed economic discussion in the country and published the book "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR"? Was I. Stalin a communist when he changed the name of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union when the party's prestige reached unprecedented heights? Was I. Stalin a communist when he finally revived the Russian Orthodox Church and made considerable efforts to strengthen its standing in the country and abroad?

Third, is the Communist Party of China communist?

And fourth, is Fidel Castro a communist?

In the answers to these questions we can see the basis of the CPRF's strategy and tactics at the present stage. Let us deal with just one aspect — economic strategy.

Russia is at a crossroads. The road that it chooses will become clear when the votes cast for the contenders for the Russian Federation presidency have been added up. But it may be said even now that most voters reject the present political and economic policy. The authorities are aware of this and are making efforts to hold on to the helm of power.

Of course the presidential election could be canceled and the newly elected Duma could be declared unconstitutional or even dissolved, as happened to the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet in October 1993 and the First and Second State Dumas in 1906-1907. But the search for an alternative to the present anti-people course will go on regardless. Not only among opposition circles but also in the government and presidential camp.

Our political opponents in the "party of power" or, to be more precise, opponents who want to hold on to power, have been trying to intimidate the voters by saying: "If the Communists come to power there will be civil war." "If the Communists come to power they will turn back the clock." Is there an element of truth in this?

First of all a civil war, not just a "cold" war, is already taking place: in Chechnya, Tajikistan, Abkhazia, and some other regions where there is a Russian population.

And when the authorities say "do not rock the boat," it should be remembered that it was the present team which "opened the valves" of our ship, and our country will constantly remain in danger while this team remains on the captain's bridge.

Second, "they will turn the clock back"? Who says this? People who have destroyed the Army, taken the country back decades in terms of the main economic indicators, want to restore the monarchy, squander the people's assets, and reduce the level of education and culture (that is, to "turn the clock back" to 1917).

Who is really taking us back 80 years (if you judge them not by their words but their deeds)? Neither claim is true of the CPRF.

Yes, in certain circumstances it will perhaps be necessary to resort to the experience of the past. Otherwise the economy cannot be restored. But the strategic direction is forward. And for that it is necessary to find an alternative in order to break the deadlock that the country is in and avert national catastrophe. There is only one sense in which the CPRF is proposing to turn the clock back: in ensuring social protection for working people and their access to all the achievements of world culture, as happened under Soviet power. But this too, I believe, is not a retreat or a backward move.

It seems to me that if we want to prevent the splitting of a society whose various sections are pursuing diametrically opposed aims, the alternative to the present policy could be a policy somewhat akin to Lenin's NEP. Russia needs a Leninist NEP for the nineties.

Let us compare the situation which developed after the Civil War with the situation existing now. The country then had only just broken free of a bloody civil war. Millions of people had died or had left the motherland for good. The industrial production volume had fallen by a factor of seven compared with prewar times. The population was suffering from epidemics, hunger, and cold. In many regions banditry was rife. The destruction of production forces, the decline in culture, unemployment, moral ruin, child neglect, and black marketeering [meshochnichestvo] — all these social ailments have been aggravated to the limit. Familiar pictures, are they not?

In just four years of the New Economic Policy industry was restored, agriculture passed the prewar level, culture and education revived, labor and vocational skills began to be restored, and confidence in the future returned. That was when a firm foundation was laid for the leap forward into the future: industrialization, collectivization, the cultural revolution, and the electrification of the entire country.

What was the secret of the Russian miracle of the twenties? First and foremost that the ruling party met the real demands of life and "plunged," to use Lenin's well-known expression, into the well of the people's creativity.

Not all state leaders understood the need for these steps. Some of them proposed using the Civil War victory to continue the "cavalry charge" on capital and "spur on" the world revolution (Trotskiy and Bukharin) whereas others, conversely, tended toward further concessions and capitulation (Kamenev and Zinovyev).

V. Lenin and the young Soviet state chose a different course: a tactical withdrawal aimed at unification with all the people's masses without which it would have been impossible to preserve not only the young state system but ancient Russia itself.

For three years after the Revolution, V. Lenin constantly tried to find the optimum link between the political system and the economic structures so as not to "impose" these new economic forms but to seek them out in real life. Finally he saw them and supported them (the food tax in place of requisitioning and NEP in place of "War communism").

The transition from food requisitioning to the food tax, which was carried out in 1921, that most critical year for the state, released the creative energy of the peasantry and then enabled the entire national economy to switch to its customary market relations. Having begun as a concession to the small property-owning elements which predominated in the country and with which a significant section of the working class was closely linked, the NEP enormously expanded the social base of state power in which not only the worker and peasant masses were henceforth to take part but also the propertied strata, including the national bourgeoisie.

The state influenced these processes not by administrative pressure but by economic methods aimed at ensuring the planned harmonization of the private (capitalist and small property-owning) economy with the state and cooperative sectors. Of course the young state was committed to the victory of socialist elements but it supported all the participants in the economic competition that was launched by guaranteeing private ownership and the freedom of capitalist accumulation and encouraging the flow of foreign capital into the country.

V. Lenin offered Russia a normal economic policy like this on the eve of the October Revolution and in the first months after its victory. Not the immediate introduction of socialism but the transition to it via a number of intermediate stages: That was the essence of such a policy.

The CPRF program is offering the same thing today too. In the initial stage it is necessary to "eliminate the disastrous consequences of the 'reforms,' halt the slump in production, and safeguard working people's main socioeconomic rights." Such a course could be called a realistic economic policy aimed at saving the country from a national catastrophe which has already claimed tens of millions of Russian citizens as victims in the recent past or is going to do so in the near future.

The realistic economic policy proposed by the CPRF is designed to prevent such an outcome to the present Russian reforms. This policy takes into account the fact that in recent years changes have occurred in society which make the "automatic" restoration of the old economic structure impossible. The mixed economy and market relations will be retained in the process of its implementation and only in the long-term, when the whole people show the will for it, will social forms of ownership gradually begin to prevail, representing not the old bureaucratic centralism but a renewed socialism based on the people's self-government. The correlation of forms of ownership will be determined by practical experience.

The realistic economic policy that has been proposed will become feasible if a government of people's trust is formed, representing all strata of society including patriotic entrepreneurs, representatives of business circles, and the directors' lobby, in the event of a presidential election victory for the left-wing forces involving the CPRF.

This policy will stabilize the situation in the country, strengthen the truly democratic structures of the state system, and ensure compromise between the diametrically opposed forces in society.

Lenin's idea of the State Planning Committee — a body designed to ensure harmonization and interaction among the sectors of the market economy — is extraordinarily relevant in present-day conditions.

The transition to the NEP demanded the restructuring of the entire system of state management at that time. A pluralist political system involving a multiplicity of parties and a comprehensively developed people's self-government was born on the basis of a mixed economy. The new type of democracy — Soviet democracy, produced by the October Revolution — was consolidated. Social tension was quickly eliminated and one of the most productive periods of construction and creative exploration in Russia's history then began.

Now the country faces the task of reviving the economy and strengthening the general democratic foundations. The realistic economic policy that is proposed is aimed at averting the threat of civil war, of the establishment of a dictatorship, and of the country's final transformation into a colony. In these conditions the CPRF sees its vital task as protecting democratic freedoms and mastering management methods in the new conditions.

Left forces criticize the present government not because it is implementing "reforms" but because the reforms are being implemented in the interests of Western monopolies instead of Russia and its people. The present government pays only lip service to the market, whereas in fact it is an administrative-functionary apparatus which is trying to change Russia's social structure by purely strong-arm, administrative-command methods.

The main task now is to save Russia. If private capital is able to make its contribution to this sacred cause its help must be accepted. There can be no question of a preprogrammed nationalization or compulsory "dekulakization." Non-economic redistribution is impermissible. Everything that citizens own legally today must be preserved, as must the high incomes of management staff who bear the full burden of responsibility for the future of the Russian economy.

Those people who earn their living honestly with their own hands, expertise, and intelligence need not be concerned for the fate of "their business." The private farmer, the domestic appliances repair man, the bricklayer, the carpenter, the hairdresser, the taxi driver, and the teacher will not earn less than before. On the contrary, the growth of the economy, which is the aim of the Communists' program, always increases the demand for skilled hands. But they will be freed from the blatant racketeering of criminals and the extortion of unscrupulous officials.

Relying on the support of a strong state, it is necessary to involve all the people in the work of restoring the country. And if a section of the people are still not ready to accept the socialist model, a directly socialist program should not be put forward. After all, civil war and reliance on force distort socialism and could jeopardize not only its shoots but also Russia's entire future. Perhaps it should be envisaged in the future that the vital key components of the state system can be changed only by referendum.

At the same time it is necessary to consider the interests of all social strata committed to strengthening Russia. The will of the majority of the people is the paramount law, but it is also necessary to take account of the legitimate aspirations of those who do not share the left-wing positions of such a majority at the given moment.

The CPRF's whole policy is oriented toward the future. Our party firmly believes that with the active participation of the Communists Russia will recover its former economic and political positions in the world and ensure a worthy, free, and prosperous life for each of its citizens. To achieve that goal it is ready to collaborate with all political forces struggling for the interests of the people and their great state.

CIS: Central Asian Leaders Discuss Summit Agenda in Kazakhstan

LD0105110696 Almaty Kazakh Television First Program Network in Russian 1400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev today received Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva and Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov.

Preparations for the upcoming summit scheduled to take place in Bishkek on 6 May was discussed at the meeting of the council of foreign ministers of the three Central Asian states.

The president of the country and the ministers discussed details of the agenda for the Bishkek summit. The question of measures for the setting up of a Central Asian battalion of peacekeepers from the three republics — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan — under UN auspices was put on the agenda for the summit at the initiative of the Kazakh side.

Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva and Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov answered journalists' questions during a news conference given in the afternoon after the meeting. The Central Asian battalion is intended to be a UN reserve battalion to be used at UN discretion. Each of the three states will form a company for a battalion numbering about 500. It will be deployed in the south Kazakhstan region. In answer to a question about the participation of military subdivisions of Uzbekistan in guarding the Tajik-Afghan border, Abdulaziz Kamilov said that if the Tajik Government fails to find a proper way to settle the conflict in the near future, Uzbek military servicemen will be withdrawn. As for Uzbekistan's unwillingness to sign the quadripartite integration agreement, he presented the following arguments against: satisfaction with the already existing treaty on the CIS and the conditions [of the said agreement] are unacceptable to the country and the independent state's individual choice. The question of existing customs duties between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was also raised during the meeting, but no final decision has been made.

Naturally, information about the upcoming Bishkek summit of the three Central Asian heads of state scheduled for 6 May was of special interest. Economic cooperation, the need for more information exchange, the pace of implementation of a treaty on a single economic zone, and the latest agreement on the Central Asian battalion are going to be discussed during the summit.

CIS: Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz Foreign Ministers Hold Meeting

LD3004175496 Almaty Kazakh Commercial Television in Russian 1225 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Council of Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan held a meeting today. Among the main issues discussed at the meeting was the current legal basis which has been agreement.

[Correspondent] Women do not break their good habits even if they hold a very high post. Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Roza Isakovna Otunbayeva was 37 seconds late, which gave her counterparts — Toqayev from Kazakhstan and Komilov from Uzbekistan — cause for serious concern. They agreed to meet at a beautiful and ancient manor house in the central part of the [Almaty] city. It used to belong to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Soviet times, but was used only on official occasions. After being restored, it has now become a reception house. Ambassadors' wives were the first to properly appreciate this renovated manor by setting up their own club like the one in Moscow. They announced this on the eve of the 1996 new year.

Foreign ministers of the Central Asian states gathered here today — on the eve of 1 May — to discuss cooperation and regional problems, including the situation in Tajikistan, the formation of a battalion of peace makers called the Central Asian battalion under UN auspices, cooperation in fighting drug trafficking, plans for the forthcoming meeting of the Central Asian heads of state scheduled to take place in Bishkek on 6 May, and so on.

The foreign ministers of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan gave a news conference on the results of the meeting in the afternoon.

Russia: Moscow Said To Have Enlisted PRC To Oppose NATO Expansion

MK3004133896 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 2

[Commentary by Dmitriy Gornostayev under the general headline: "President's Eastern Visits"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian president's visit to China last week demonstrated that as 16 June draws closer, Boris Yeltsin is making not only his internal but also his external policy more popular. In this case, his Asia tour won him additional campaign trump cards. As for Russia's longer-term interests, the results here are mainly positive, albeit not without flaws.

One such flaw, one would think, is the vague formula of the Russian-Chinese border demarcation solution. Many in the PRC and the Russian Federation expected that Yeltsin's second visit to China during his presidential term would finally dot the i's and cross the t's in the territorial dispute between Moscow and Beijing. If one recalls that, the day before he appeared in Beijing, the president had promised a throng of Khabarovsk residents not to surrender the islands disputed by the Chinese side, it will be clear that the problem will not be settled soon.

Most probably, having feared to pose the territorial question sharply and spoil the general friendly atmosphere of the visit, Yeltsin the president pleased Yeltsin the candidate.

Making up to a certain extent for this flaw is the Treaty of the Five, an agreement on confidence building along the border, signed in Shanghai by the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China. It at least guarantees that there will be no incidents like the one on Damanskiy Island [in the 1960's]. The treaty might do away with illegal crossing of the Russian border by the Chinese in search of additional earnings — such trespassers have often acted very aggressively, which several times had lethal consequences for them and sometimes for Russian border guards. Now, perhaps, the Chinese border guards will help their Russian counterparts by preventing violations of the common border by PRC citizens.

The most important from the point of view of world geopolitics is the fact that Russia has enlisted China's support for its stance on NATO's eastward expansion. PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin made it understood clearly, after talks with Yeltsin, that Beijing is against forming blocs between countries on a military basis. Incidentally, when in Beijing, Yeltsin very distinctly aired the idea that no one state can be permitted to dictate its will to others. Which state he had in mind is fairly clear.

It seems in this connection that two great world powers could very well prevent a tendency toward domination on the world scene by the third one. But, without a doubt, this is not supposed to lead to a worsening of the Kremlin's relations with the West, and primarily with the White House. In this respect, Russia's geographical position can in the best way possible coincide with its geopolitical position: It should be a link between the East and the West, while at the same time profiting from this.

If something crops up, Moscow would be able to always meaningfully hint to Washington that it has good relations with Beijing and vice versa. Incidentally, the warm background against which Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin were talking must have certainly put on guard their counterparts in the West. It is no secret that the West fears a strategic alliance of the two monsters: the Russian bear and the Chinese dragon. While no such alliance is in the cards yet, the Americans would not mind cooler relations between the Russian Federation and the PRC.

However, there is one thing about which Washington must be pleased as regards the results of Yeltsin's visit to China. The Russian president in fact managed to soften the PRC's stance on the nuclear test ban problem, and the Chinese seem to have agreed to accede to a corresponding treaty. It is true that Boris Yeltsin might have made this statement while Jiang had not made a final decision. But it would be somewhat embarrassing to repudiate the words of his opposite number after kissing in public and signing 15 joint documents.

Undoubtedly, Yeltsin managed to let the G-7 witness Russia's influence and prestige. There he kept the promise that he had given during the nuclear safety problems summit in Moscow.

We know that China has always been the biggest problem for the members of the nuclear club. For having solved it, the G-7 could very well reward Russia by admitting it as a member, thus becoming a G-8 in the full sense.

This could happen during the next summit, in Lyon, to which Boris Yeltsin has also been invited. This summit will incidentally take place on 27 and 28 June, and on 30 June comes the second round of the presidential election in Russia. It seems that the G-7 leaders will not pass up the chance to give the guarantor of democracy in Russia yet another nice trump card.

Russia: Yeltsin 'Proposals' for Business With China

MM3004150996 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 2

["B. Yeltsin's Proposals Are Not an Election Stunt But a Long-Term Program Offered to Businessmen To Assimilate" — ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA headline; item appears to be verbatim account of speech by President Yeltsin to Far East businessmen — precise place, date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] **1. China's involvement in assimilating and marketing advanced Russian technological developments.** Above all, in the spheres of power generation, the aerospace industry, software, etc.

Good opportunities for cooperation are being opened up in the sphere of **civil aviation**. Including the creation of a new generation of civil aircraft for operation in both Russia and China.

Powerful "Ruslans" belonging to the Volga-Dnepr airline are already flying confidently in China's skies. This company will soon be setting up a Russian-Chinese air transport joint venture.

I attach great significance to arranging cooperation with China in the sphere of **the conversion of defense enterprises**. At such enterprises, with the involvement of Chinese financial and material-technical resources, Russian technological developments could be brought up to the stage of marketable output, with subsequent sale both in our countries and in third countries.

Russia and China have favorable opportunities for developing cooperation in the sphere of **peaceful space exploration**.

We will encourage business cooperation and foreign economic activity on the territory of **the Far East and the Transbaykal region** at an accelerated pace. In particular, we propose to introduce a special export procedure for the region's enterprises. A system of **tax breaks, guarantees, and risk reduction** is being worked out for top-priority investors.

Every kray, oblast, and republic in the Far East and the Transbaykal region will have **regional programs for attracting foreign and Russian investments** on favorable terms.

We regard the following as the priority projects for attracting foreign investments in the Far East:

— the development of oil and gas deposits in Sakhalin and Yakutia;

— participation in the working of deposits of diamonds in Yakutia, gold in Kamchatka, and tin in Khabarovsk and Maritime Krays;

— the development of Khabarovsk Kray's timber resources and participation in exploiting the fish resources of Russia's Far Eastern seas;

— the development of the tourism industry in Kamchatka;

— the construction of transport and port and warehouse complexes on the coast of the Sea of Japan and the Tatar Strait, on the Amur River, and elsewhere.

2. The involvement of Russian enterprises and banks in the construction of projects in keeping with Chinese credit agreements [pod kreditnyye oglasheniya Kitaya].

Russia intends to take an active part in the reconstruction and modernization of industrial projects built with our help in the fifties. We are prepared to cooperate in the construction of other projects.

Of course, practically all the main Russian producers and suppliers of power generation equipment are prepared to embark on the implementation of such a major project as the Three Gorges.

3. The creation of a more flexible banking infrastructure for cooperation.

The question of using the **ruble** and the **yuan** in transactions relating to decentralized trade should be worked out at the level of the two countries' central banks. It would be possible to create a specialized **Russian-Chinese open-type joint-stock bank** with the participation of government organizations and private structures.

I regard as positive the fact that the largest Russian commercial banks are turning to China. Pioneers in this sphere, you might say — the leaders of Inkombank and Rossiyskiy Kredit — are present at our meeting. They have received permission to open branches in China.

The Program for the Long-Term Development of the Far East and the Transbaykal Region that russia has adopted proposes, in particular, the creation of the international Far East Development Bank along the lines of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, maybe in Vladivostok.

4. It is necessary be more active in setting up **centers of trade and economic cooperation on a commercial basis.** They will assist the Russian and Chinese partners.

The system of management of our trade and economic ties is in need of improvement. I mean the use of various forms of state guarantees, including the signing of agreements on government guarantees of deliveries and on government credits.

The consumer in our countries must not be disappointed in the Chinese trademark and the Russian trademark.

5. The development of cross-border trade and economic ties. These already account for something like 30 percent of Russian-Chinese economic cooperation. It is necessary to accelerate the switch to "higher" kinds of economic partnership which meet international standards. These propose not only intermediary trading companies but also **production collaboration, investment cooperation, and the creation of joint ventures**.

Industrial-agrarian cooperation between the Russian Far East and Northeast China has good prospects. I mean the pooling of fuel and energy resources in border krays and oblasts of Russia and of developed agricultural production technologies in neighboring provinces of China. The mutual interest in this form of cooperation predetermines its long-term nature. Corresponding working organs have been set up to arrange it.

The creation of trade zones, particularly in the Zabaykalsk region, is one of the possible ways of improving cross-border commodity exchange.

The problem of developing **the infrastructure of the Russian customs border** is very acute. Over 20 crossing points are now functioning on the border with China. Their provision with facilities and the construction of new ones are proceeding slowly.

Here too we could find opportunities for mutually advantageous cooperation.

I also hope for the active participation of Chinese organizations in the creation of a **transit transport network** in the south of Maritime Kray (the ports of Zarubino, Posyet, Vladivostok, Nakhodka, and Vostochnyy).

Russia: Izhevsk To Supply China With Small Missiles, Launchers

LD3004153396 Moscow ECONOMIC NEWS AGENCY in Russian 1400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aleksandr Volkov, chairman of the Udmurt Republic State Council, told a Moscow news conference that Kalashnikov automatic guns, small arms, and small rocket launchers like the "Start" are in demand abroad. A contract was signed recently to supply China with small missiles and rocket launchers. Izhevsk would receive half the payment in U.S. dollars and half in consumer goods. The contract is estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars.

Russia: Panov: 'No Obstacles' in Selling Weapons to Japan

LD0105055896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0546 GMT 1 May 96

[By Andrey Varlamov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow May 1 (Itar-Tass) — Russia sees no political obstacles in selling Su-27 combat aircraft to Japan, according to Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov, who said, however, that so far Tokyo has shown no definite intention to buy Russian weapons.

"Moscow sees no obstacles, apart from purely commercial issues of the price, for holding talks with Tokyo on sales of Russian military technologies and equipment", Panov told Tass on Wednesday commenting on the statement of Japanese Defence head Hideo Usui, made during his recent visit to Moscow, about the possibility to "discuss at the working level" the possible purchases of Russian military technologies.

"We know that some Japanese experts even spoke in favour of purchasing batches of Su-27 or air defence complexes C-300", Panov said adding that "we would only welcome such an approach and always said that talks can be held if interest is displayed".

"However, so far there is no clearly stated intention from the Japanese side to start negotiations on purchasing Russian military technologies", he said.

Russia: Moscow Insists on Participation in Korean Peace Process

LD3004123296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1112 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Andrey Kirillov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian Foreign Ministry believes that the following three main aspects will be discussed during an official visit of South Korean Foreign Minister Kong No-myong to Moscow: the situation on the Korean peninsula, bilateral relations, and some wider-scope international matters, a high-ranking Russian diplomat told Itar-Tass on Tuesday. The South Korean Minister's visit is due to begin on May 5.

The Russian side intends to adhere to its "all-embracing" initiative to convene a multilateral conference on the Korean peninsula issue, said Yevgeniy Afanasyev, Director of the Ministry's 1st Asian Department. "This initiative meets the interests of all states most fully. On the whole, we believe that the North-South dialogue is of exceptional importance," the diplomat said.

"As far as other initiatives are concerned, we also watch them closely but we think that the best format is wherever Russia participates," Afanasyev emphasised. Both Korean sides and all the states concerned, including Russia, should participate in a conference on Korea.

"We shall have discussions and take counsel with one another. The principal purpose is to compare our positions and determine points of agreement and points of divergence. I would not like to predict the way discussions will proceed specifically. Recently we consulted with North Korea when Russian Vice-Premier Vitaliy Ignatenko was visiting it, and obtained more specific information about the North Korean point of view," the Russian diplomat said.

"North Korea considers that the main channel of dialogue is with the United States. They believe that the problem should be tackled on a bilateral basis," Afanasyev pointed out.

According to reports from Seoul, the South Korean Foreign Minister, during his forthcoming talks his Russian counterpart Yevgeniy Primakov, will seek to win the Russian side's support for Seoul's and Washington's proposal to hold talks with the participation of South Korea, North Korea, the U.S. and China on the establishment of a permanent peace regime on the Korean peninsula in place of the 1953 Armistice Agreement.

Russia: Primakov, Iraq's al-Anbari Discuss UN Oil-for-Food Talks

JN3004171796 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1500 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 30 Apr (INA)—Russian Foreign Minister Yevegeniy Primakov met today with Ambassador Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari [head of the Iraqi team to the oil talks with the United Nations], who is currently visiting Moscow.

In a statement to the INA correspondent in Moscow after the meeting, Dr. al-Anbari said that he conveyed a message from Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz to the Russian foreign minister concerning the progress of the talks between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat over the oil-for-food issue.

He said that Primakov welcomed the deputy prime minister's initiative to explain Iraq's viewpoint on the U.S. and British interference at the conclusion of the third round of talks. He said that Primakov stressed that his country supports the Iraqi position and underlines the need to abort attempts to foil these negotiations. The negotiations are being conducted to reach an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations which would benefit Iraq and help implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. Al-Anbari said this resolution stipulates ending the oil embargo against Iraq.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Hasan Fahmi Jum'ah, Iraq's ambassador to the Russian Federation. For the Russian side, the meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk, the head of the Foreign Ministry's Organizations Department, and the head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East and North Africa Department.

Dr. al-Anbari met with several officials from the Russian Foreign Ministry yesterday. They discussed in detail all aspects of the draft memorandum of understanding that was discussed in the recent talks between Iraq and the United Nations. [passage omitted]

Russia: Finnish Foreign Minister Meets Chernomyrdin, Primakov

LD3004150696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1405 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Denis Perkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (Itar-Tass) — Finnish Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen met Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov during her visit to Moscow on April 28-30, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin told a briefing on Tuesday.

Halonen and Chernomyrdin discussed a session of prime ministers of the Council of Baltic States scheduled for May 3 and 4 in Sweden, preparations for the Russian Prime Minister's visit to Finland on May 4 and 5, and bilateral relations, Demurin said.

Halonen and Primakov discussed construction of more checkpoint on the Russian-Finnish border, improvement of consular services and strengthening of the legal basis of bilateral relations, he said.

The two sides "expressed special satisfaction over the fact there are no unsolved problems in bilateral relations," the spokesman stressed.

Much attention was paid to Baltic and Euro-Arctic cooperation in the light of Russia's holding the presidency of the Council of the Barentsevo and Euro-Arctic region, he said.

"A common opinion was expressed that the most important task nowadays is to assure the full implementation of regional projects of economic and environmental cooperation, including those financed by the European Union," he said.

The ministers discussed a wide range of international issues, including further development of European cooperation, setting up a system of comprehensive security in Europe, reforms in the United Nations, the Middle East peace process, and further efforts by the Minsk group of the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe to solve the Karabakh problem, according to the spokesman.

"The Russian side decisively pointed out the unacceptability of NATO's plans to expand and advance its infrastructure to the Russian borders," he stressed.

Russia: Defense Expert Surikov on Baltic NATO Entry

WS0105084696 Tallinn Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release in English 1429 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Tallinn POSTIMEES interview with Russian Defense expert Anatoliy Surikov, by Marko Mihkelson, titled "Russian Troops Will Immediately Invade Estonia if Estonia Joins NATO"; in Moscow on 27 April—first four paragraphs are introduction by the press release]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the following interview, Anatoliy Surikov puts it into black and white: to avoid conflict, the Baltic States must do everything Moscow wants. Russia is using the nuclear threat to get its way in general and to ensure that the West will not help the Baltics.

"Russian Troops Will Immediately Invade Estonia If Estonia Joins NATO; Interview with Russian Military Analyst Anatoliy Surikov," by Marko Mihkelson in Moscow. POSTIMEES, April 27, 1996.

Translation from the Estonian by the Press Spokesman's Office, Estonian Foreign Ministry.

Box: On April 8, POSTIMEES published a reference from the Russian Defense Research Institute's military reform concept, which stated that the Baltic region is the most conflict prone of all the former Soviet Union and that it cannot be ruled out that this is the place where Moscow may need to employ its military force in the near future. One of the authors, 35 year old Anatoliy Surikov readily agreed to answer questions and to explain what exactly is being planned in connection with the Baltic States in Moscow.

[Mihkelson] Who contracts studies from your institute and who, specifically ordered the one on military reform?

[Surikov] Our private institute usually gets contracts from the Ministry of Defense, the State Defense Industry Committee and the Ministry of Atomic Energy. We also offer our work and studies to potential clients. The study on military reform was formally our own institute's intitiative. No one paid a penny for it. At the same time it would be naive to say that we just did it. I cannot name specific names, but we were asked to deal with that subject. Those people work in the Ministry of Defense and other organizations. People who work in official positions cannot state such thoughts, because this would create an international scandal. We, however, are an independent institute and can proclaim whatever we want. We sent this concept as well as the defense doctrine published last fall to various ministries, the presidential and parliamentary structures. They were published in all the military newspapers. I can confirm that most of the representatives of the power structures are in agreement with our ideas.

[Mihkelson] What is the status and direction of Russia's defense research in general?

[Surikov] Quite a few institutes deal with that topic. They can be divided into two broad groups. There are those which work in the same direction as we do. For example, the official Ministry of Defense document which Grachev (Minister for Defense Pavel Grachev) recently introduced, has the same approach. In agreement with us is, for example, General Rohlin (Chairman of the Duma Defense Committee Lev Rohlin, who directed the attack on Groznyy last year). I could also name Russia's Strategic Research Institute. On the other hand there are the Baturin type of people (Yuriy Baturin, Presidential Adviser on National Security). They are supposed to be responsible for the main direction, but at the same time they do not do anything. Politically they, of course, are not in agreement with us.

[Mihkelson] How would you describe these two trends?

[Surikov] The opinion represented by the so-called Baturin people reflects our recent past. In 1992 and 1993 at the instigation of the democrats, the idea was circulated that we are friends with the Americans and brothers for centuries. So they have remained in this past. It is now clear, that there can be no talk of friendship and partnership with the West. We have our own national interests, which we have to defend. And not always with the use of arms. Concerning the United States and other nations, then they are our competitors. Not enemies, but competitors. It can be said that our point of view has already begun to dominate and I hope that it will get a new impulse after the presidential elections. In this connection, it is not important who wins. In the broad picture, policy will not begin to differ.

[Mihkelson] In your studies you have emphasized that the USA and the NATO countries are Russia's potential enemies. Isn't this approach limited and won't this push Russia onto a path of self-isolation?

[Surikov] The existence of a possible enemy does not necessarily mean war. We just understand that we are strangers to them. Even more so since NATO is a military alliance. A military alliance cannot not have enemies. Russia does not in the near future present a threat to NATO. They do not have a necessity to defend themselves against us. So what's left? Clearly this — to use offensive tactics against us. I do not have in mind Hitler's activities in 1941, but other paths are possible. Regarding isolation, then competition in the military sphere or the taking of adequate countermeasures to NATO doesn't mean that we will not continue trade with Germany or the USA, (doesn't mean that we won't continue) contact between people and so forth.

[Mihkelson] You write that if NATO decides to expand, especially into the Baltic States, then military conflict between Russia and Western nations is unavoidable.

[Surikov] It is not I alone who has said that. Minister for Defence Grachev announced that the taking of the Baltic states into NATO would be the last drops into Russia's chalice of suffering.

[Mihkelson] What does that mean?

[Surikov] That means, that if a genuine attempt is made to make the Baltic States members of NATO, we will move our troops into the Baltic States. This is unavoidable. At the same time, if the Baltic States do not provoke us, we will never send our troops there. We are interested that the Baltic States, among them Estonia, would be independent and Russia-friendly states. Why are we interested in this? For instance, Estonia may play the same role in the region as Hong Kong in Asia. This means, that Estonia could be a kind of bridge between the CIS and Europe. On the one hand, you have good chances to integrate into the West, on the other you know the West better than [you know] Russia. If you do not threaten our security, I repeat yet again, then we will never occupy, nor unite (you) nor invade the Baltic States.

[Mihkelson] What could threaten Russia's security?

[Surikov] First, if, for example, there were to develop a serious conflict between Estonians and Russians. That is very dangerous. Many Russians have developed an understanding of Estonia as a kind of a South African-style small fascist state which implements apartheid policies. Thank God, it has been possible to avoid conflicts. The other problem is connected without a doubt to NATO expansion. There are no other problems. If you could solve these problems, then there would be no cause for conflicts between you and Russia. No one would even think of destroying Estonia and its independence. It wuld not even be a question.

[Mihkelson] Couldn't Russia still attack Estonia for some reason of its own making?

[Surikov] You have to understand, Russia would begin a military operation against you only if you officially become a member of NATO. With that, the operation would begin instantly. In the second instance, Russia could send its forces to Estonia if the physical destruction of Russians or the massive expulsion of Russians were to begin. For no other reason would Russia use military force against Estonia. If you were to ask whether Russia plans to attack you now or in the future, then I would answer in the negative. A positive answer would come only in the two named instances.

[Mihkelson] Therefore, you believe in the independence of the Baltic States if the joining of NATO nor ethnic conflict doesn't take place?

[Surikov] I believe the Baltic states will remain independent in any case. Bringing in troops does not necesssarily mean your being united with Russia. Elections would come, a new government would come, with whom we can hold talks about the withdrawal of troops. But in this case, the government has to be one which would guarantee Estonia's non-participation in anti-Russian military alliances. After that we would immediately withdraw our troops.

[Mihkelson] How would you characterize Estonia's defense capability?

[Surikov] I rate your defense capability as very low. In essence you don't have one. There is no sense in comparing you with the Chechens. On the territory of the former Soviet Union, I rate highly only the defense capability of Armenia and Chechnya.

[Mihkelson] But you don't really believe that a Russian invasion would occur without any resistance?

[Surikov] Yes, of course. There will be a war in which individual armed groups will offer resistance. But all this will be limited to partisan activities. When it comes to the defense of Tallinn, for example, then you simply are not capable of organizing a Groznyy type of defense. Your problem is that, when the Russian troops come in, instantly society will divide between the two larger ethnic groups. Russians simply do not have anywhere to go other than to pick up a weapon and to fight against you.

[Mihkelson] Are you convinced that Western nations will not come to the aid of Estonia in the case of a Russian invasion? In your opinion, what might be the Western reaction in any case?

[Surikov] What can they do to us? We have nuclear weapons. That the West will not begin to fight for you should be clear to you. No sane American or Brit would put London or Washington under threat of nuclear attack.

[Mihkelson] Do you believe that, if the West were nevertheless to decide to defend the Baltic States in some fashion, that Russia would use nuclear weapons?

[Surikov] That is clear. In case a military invasion were to take place into the territory of the former Soviet Union, Russia would use nuclear weapons. We are capable of launching nuclear weapons within one hour.

[Mihkelson] Are you speaking here as a private person or do you represent official positions as well?

[Surikov] I'm speaking as a private person. At the same time, I know a number of people who work in high positions in various structures who think exactly the same way. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, we have fallen behind the West in conventional weapons. Therefore, our only means of balancing are nuclear weapons. By the way, during the Cold War, NATO used that tactic. Now that move is in the opposite direction. What could they do for you militarily? They could send a naval fleet, land some troops, but the most important is air support. What will we do? Give a nuclear counterstrike to NATO air force bases in Poland, Germany. To stop the navy we would strike the Danish straits. To stop the landing we could use miniature nuclear bombs. And in this connection the strike would come directly at Estonia or the bases of the landing force. But I hope that all this will not happen. If we are provoked and forced into a corner, then we have no other path but this.

[Mihkelson] Russia still depends to a great extent on foreign aid. Don't you think that the West could implement tough economic sanctions against Russia if Russia were to decide to use force against the Baltics?

[Surikov] That's nonsense. What can they do, discontinue flights between Moscow and Washington or boycot some sports competitions? Germany will never give up Russia's oil and gas, because a third of their natural gas comes from Russia. We also have certain possibilities to work against sanctions. What would the West think if we were to begin to distribute rocket technology all over the world. At the same time, it is certain that universal sanctions won't come. China, India, even Turkey for example would never participate in this. Even if it were somehow possible to really isolate us, then the [Russian] people would simply consolidate. This has happened repeatedly. Take, for example, during the time of the Great Patriotic War. So much the worse for the Western nations. In essence we may see a repetition of what happened after the Soviet Army's invasion of Afghanistan. The West will make a lot of noise in international organizations and that's all.

[Mihkelson] NATO expansion has been decided. What might Russia do if, for example, Poland and the Czech Republic were to join NATO?

[Surikov] Russia will not send its troops to Poland. Poland is not Estonia or Latvia, Poland is a big nation. At the same time, this will bring with it a sudden worsening of relations between Russia and the Western countries. This may affect the increase in our military cooperation with Southeastern Asian countries, Iran. This may bring with it the provocation of anti-American conflicts somewhere in Asia or in the Near East. Sooner or later this will inevitably lead to a nuclear confrontation. We will shift our nuclear arms as close as possible to NATO. This could be called military-politically the nuclear curtain.

[Mihkelson] From your discussion one can draw the conclusion that in the near future a major confrontation will inevitably develop between East and West. Does this mean an outbreak of a new cold war?

[Surikov] If NATO expands, the worsening of relations and the development of military confrontation in Europe are unavoidable. The border for this confrontation may turn out to be the eastern border of Belarus and of Kaliningrad. Using Yeltsin's words, I would call this confrontation a cold peace. At the same time, I say that we are not interested in this happening. We will never take the first step. If NATO doesn't expand, then nothing like this will happen.

Russia: Black Sea Fleet Issues 'Agreed'

LD3004152696 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Viktor Kravchenko, commander of the Black Sea Fleet, held his first news conference in Sevastopol today:

[Correspondent Vladimir Plotnikov] Answering a question from an ORTV correspondent about the timing for Boris Yeltsin's visit to Kiev, the admiral made a sensational statement:

[Begin Kravchenko recording] According to the latest information that I received yesterday, the visit could take place even before 9 May. At present, all issues concerning the Black Sea fleet have been agreed upon. I cannot tell you precisely in what aspect they have been agreed upon for the Black Sea fleet because I do not have this information. I surmise, however, that the status of the Black Sea fleet has been defined, that is the first thing. Second, a procedure for stationing the Black Sea fleet here seems to have been defined too. [end recording]

[Plotnikov] The journalists asked Kravchenko to clarify whether both the Russian and Ukrainian fleets will be based in Sevastopol. To this, Viktor Kravchenko replied: If my information says that all the issues have been taken into account, that means they have been taken into account in a proper manner.

Russia: West Turns 'Blind Eye' to Yeltsin Faults

MM3004141196 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Vladimir Bolshakov: "The Pervomayskoye Drama and the Elections. How Votes Are Being Bought"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris — French television recently showed a reportage from Pervomayskoye village in Dagestan. The same village which Grachev's "strategists" recently bombarded with Katyusha rocket launchers and other weapons to "free the hostages" taken by the Chechen gunmen. As we all know, the hostages were not freed. The gunmen took them and escaped, bypassing all the border posts and units (posts "so secure that a fly could not get through"). But the village took a battering: Many of its inhabitants returned home after this "special operation" to find rubble.

"You would think that this population center was the last place in which to campaign for B.N. Yeltsin's reelection as president," the French TV announcer said. "But in Russia anything is possible...." Subsequent pictures showed money and cars being handed out to the victims of Pervomayskoye. There were new Zhiguli cars with the words "A Gift from President B.N. Yeltsin" painted on them. Then the authors of the reportage, which has already been shown in Moscow on ORT, asked a question which did not seem intrusive: "Whom are you going to vote for now?" "For Yeltsin, who else?" the brand-new millionaires (in Gaydar's rubles, of course) and owners of Yeltsin's Zhigulis replied.

If such a reportage were filmed in any of the G-7 or European Union countries it could immediately be used as material evidence in a case against a candidate accused of buying votes. And if the candidate in question proved to be a president cr prime minister who had confused his own pocket with the state's and was setting out to buy votes using gifts paid for by the taxpayer, this criminal case would result not only in the appropriate prison sentence but also in a long ban from elected office on the overzealous candidate after leaving prison. But in the Russian Federation the president has total license. He can even use the subordinate mass media as he sees fit: either to publicize himself or to berate his political opponents.

Incidentally, in a country where legislation is tremendously difficult to establish and where the Constitution is fashioned in the image of a president who has so many rights that he simply does not know what he is not allowed to do, this kind of total license is perfectly understandable. But why do Western human rights campaigners forgive the Russian Federation president everything? The recent meeting of the G-7 leaders in Moscow was held immediately after Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng's visit to Paris. In addition to his official program, which included the routine lectures on how China should treat its citizens, the eminent guest also had to face a whole series of protest demonstrations against the "persecution of dissidents in China," the "violation of ethnic minorities' rights," and so forth. However, when French President Jacques Chirac came to Moscow he was not alone but was accompanied by the six leaders of the main democratic countries, the president of the European Union, and so on and so forth. And they said nothing! As though Chechnya never existed! As though around 80 percent of Russians were not living in poverty! And as though the human rights situation in the Russian Federation were better than in the Vatican!

Clearly the G-7 are playing for a high stake or rather for high stakes here. This is not just a question of complicity in the plunder of Russia's natural wealth but also of the de facto shareout among its members of advanced technology, know-how, production capacities, and highly skilled scientists and engineers from the Russian Federation's military-industrial complex.

They are also demanding control of Russia's Armed Forces. It is no coincidence that prior to the Moscow G-7 meeting the Western newspapers kicked up such a fuss over the construction of a "secret installation" in the southern Urals. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. It is harder to guess what "bosom buddies" Boris and Bill talked about in the corridor during their secret two-hour tete-a-tete. But one thing may be asserted with total confidence: that the present regime in the Russian Federation was promised every Western support. To prevent a Communist victory in the forthcoming presidential election. The West, by all accounts, is prepared to turn a blind eye to everything. And if something similar to the events of October 1993 in Moscow happens again, it will do the same again, to make sure that only the "specter of communism" haunts Russia but on no account real live communists whocould achieve real political power. The G-7 leaders' complete silence in Moscow on Chechnya and other human rights violations in the Russian Federation makes you think that such a deal could already have been struck.

Regrettably the lessons of history are not learned. It is now obvious that in their fanatical hatred of communism since Kerenskiy's times the West's leaders have worked on the assumption that they only have to reach agreement with a Russian leader who suits them in order to dictate their terms to the Russians. But in Russia, as history shows, the more pro-Western a leader is, the less secure he is. Let us hope that in June 1996 we will receive further proof of that.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Addresses May Day Rally, Calls For Election Support

LD0105100296 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0735 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Since 0700 this morning people have been gathering in Tverskaya Street in Moscow to take part in marches and rallies organized by the capital's trade unions. The number of people here was in our estimation between 8,000 and 10,000. [passage omitted]

In about an hour's time President Yeltsin will speak to a rally here, in Tverskaya Street.

[begin recording] [Correspondent V. Skvortsov] A rally of Moscow's trade unions began in Dolgorukiy Square at 1030. [video shows Yeltsin coming on to the podium]

[Unidentified speaker on podium] Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin has arrived at our rally. [video shows crowd greeting Yeltsin]

[Yeltsin] Dear friends, on this May Day, albeit not a very sunny one, I wish to congratulate you on this springtime labor day from the bottom of my heart. The tradition of marking May Day has been with us for more than 100 years now. This festive day is a day of creativity, hope, and spring. It is especially important for all of us that May Day should always be a day of peace in Russia, a day for honest and open dialogue between the authorities elected by the people and the Russian trade unions, the largest public organizations of the country. We must act together. Only by joint efforts can we bring the nation together and overcome the split of many years in Russian society. This is the only way for us to win the elections.

I am sure that we can make the June elections an event when people will make their final choice as to which way Russia is to go. Democracy and social justice must for ever take root on Russian soil. The renewal of Russia and the well-being of all Russian citizens have been my whole raison d'etre. Therefore I am sincerely grateful to those who are inspiring me and will support me in this election campaign. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Russia: Police, Interior Troops Reinforced During May Holiday

LD0105054796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0503 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow May 1 (Itar-Tass) — Moscow authorities plan to turn the revolutionary May 1 holiday, which was marked in Soviet years under the slogan "Peace and Labour", into a holiday of "Good and Mercy" and ruled that the public transport, museums and cinema halls will operate for free on the day.

Communist hard-liners, however, plan to use the holiday to criticise the government of President Boris Yeltsin, but pledged to refrain from any violence like it happened two years ago when they clashed with police.

Still Moscow police, reinforced with Interior troops, have been lining up early on Wednesday to protect law and order in the city.

On Tuesday President Boris Yeltsin ordered his "power ministers" to resort to the "toughest measures" to avert any provocations during May holidays. It is feared that Chechen militants may use the occasion for new terrorist acts.

In St. Petersburg, the second biggest Russian city, police and security officers also went on alert.

Demonstrations of communists and democrats are expected to take place in downtown city and a rally is to be held on Dvortsovaya Square next to the Winter Palace.

Over 250 policemen will guard the rally "to avoid incidents", Tass was told at the local police headquarters which added that the streets of the city will be patrolled day and night by reinforced units. The protection of major industrial objects, the main streets and parks has been mounted as well.

Both in Moscow and St. Petersburg the May 1 festivities will last through the whole day and will include concerts, shows and dances.

In Moscow the main event is a parade of parents with their newly-borns in perambulators. Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov will present gifts to the participants. The parade will be held under the motto "The Good is Born in the Family".

In other Russian towns and cities, communists are determined to celebrate the holiday in the Soviet style. Rallies to demand "better social protection" will be held in Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia in southern Siberia, in Novgorod, Murmansk and other places.

In Murmansk the employees of the Kola nuclear power plant will rally to demand back wages which they have not been actually paid since the beginning of the year.

Russia: Spetsnaz Units Said Moved to Moscow Amid Fears of Clashes

MM3004163996 Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian
No. 18, May 96 (Signed to Press 29 Apr 96) p 2

[Unattributed, untitled report from the "Political Salad" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many well-informed sources in Moscow are now expressing fears about possible clashes between the power structures and procommunist demonstrators during the May holidays. Both the authorities and the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] are expecting possible provocations from one another.

According to reports from these sources, the troops brought in for the 9 May parade will not be withdrawn until the presidential elections have ended. It is alleged that seven GRU [Main Intelligence Directorate] spetsnaz brigades, which are usually stationed in the military districts, are already secretly assembled around Moscow. The "toughest" of these is said to be the 16th Chuchkovskiy brigade, where special attention is devoted to the training of snipers. The special services are said to have drawn up a list of 2,000 people who could be put behind bars if there is open confrontation between the CPRF and the authorities. However, such rumours appear in Russia with enviable regularity ahead of significant political events.

Russia: Yeltsin Meets With Leaders of Republics

LD3004132396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian
1100 GMT 30 Apr 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian president met the leaders of republics within Russia today.

[begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] The heads of the republics within Russia brought the usual selection of problems to their latest meeting with the president today. At least one of these was discussed in the vestibule of the out-of-town reception building.

Talking about his visit to China, Boris Yeltsin among other things expressed his admiration for the pace of Shanghai's economic prosperity, so starting a discussion of the taxation system in our country. Judging from the rejoinders made by the president and the people he was talking to, this subject is being actively debated in Kremlin and government offices and it cannot be ruled out that in the near future Boris Yeltsin's Shanghai meetings will have highly promising consequences for Russia's entrepreneurs. That is, of course, in the event that the concept of enterprise is not buried in the results of the coming elections. Of course, this is the problem worrying the people taking part in today's meeting with Boris Yeltsin most of all.

[Nikolay Fedorov, president of Chuvashia] I think it is important now to have a better understanding of the main, perhaps the extra, threats as the election campaign gets tougher and we have to hold on — very trite words, these — to our stability and predictability. The main opposition force is, after all, taking extremely radical positions, being a force which has forgotten nothing from history but, alas, has learned nothing from it. There is one agenda in the Communists' election program: stepping up the national liberation struggle of the Russian people. That is their main agenda, once they have come to power. The next agenda is stepping up the fight against the counter-revolution. Third, restoring the sovereignty of the soviets.

What does that all mean? It is clear to me as a lawyer that the calls for all this are anti-law and revolutionary calls, calls for bloodshed. It is an attempt to restore all that, or implement all that. It means there is no economy, no social security for the population. All this means plunging Russia back into chaos and darkness. [end recording] [video shows Yeltsin shaking hands with leaders]

Russia: Court Rules on Yeltsin Right to Issue Decrees

LD3004150396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1319 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Igor Belskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW April 30 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian Constitutional Court declared on Tuesday that Russian President, under the Federal Constitution, has a right to issue decrees overcoming the flows in legislation, in order to normalise the activity of executive authorities. The time of the validity of these decrees should be limited by the adoption of legislative acts.

The only requirement for the holding of free elections of heads of the local administration is the presence of the legislative base. Thus, subjects of the federation in whose territories these norms have already been introduced can hold elections without looking to the federal authorities. Any decision interfering with this may be complained against to judiciary bodies, the Constitutional Court decreed.

On requests from the State Duma and legislative assemblies of four subjects of the federation the court analysed the Russian President's decree "On measures for the consolidation of the unified executive authorities in Russia". Legislators were of the opinion that the appointment and dismissal of heads of the administrations of the federation's subjects by decrees of the head of state and the use of disciplinary measures against them limit the competence of the legislative authorities and curb powers of subjects of the federation in independent forming of state authorities.

Russia: Yeltsin's Health Described as Worrisome

MK3004141896 Moscow ZAVTRA in Russian No. 18, May 96 (signed to press 26 Apr 1996) p 1

[Unattributed "intelligence report by the 'Den' security service" under the "Scoreboard" rubric]

[FBIS Translated Text] — Reports have been arriving from Yeltsin's close entourage to the effect that after a certain pause and a period of abstinence the president has once again begun to hit the bottle. His recent trip to the Cossack areas in the south was accompanied by feasts at which the president "imbibed one glass after another," according to eyewitnesses, after which he felt sick on board the plane. When a nurse from the medical unit accompanying Yeltsin remarked to him: "What are they doing to you, Boris Nikolayevich! They are ruining you!" she was fired at once. The impression is that the presidential entourage, by placing clearly too heavy a campaign burden on him, wants "to overwork" him, even in the run-up to the election — this could help them to manipulate slightly all of the political procedures related to the transfer of power.

At present, the factor of Yeltsin's health is still closely monitored by both the president's followers and his opponents.

Despite all predictions to the effect that he may "pass away soon" owing to an infarction, stroke, or liver problem, Yeltsin continues to demonstrate his remarkable physical reserves. After two stints at the Central Clinical Hospital he is campaigning for reelection quite effectively and looks fairly viable on television screens.

Nonetheless, medical specialists and psychologists are not inclined to display optimism. The president's supporters are frantically struggling for the post of prime minister; that is, to become the person who, to all appearances, will take over the functions of the head of state for three months should Yeltsin be taken to the Central Clinical Hospital once again. The president's rivals are basing their scenarios of the struggle for power on the assumption that Boris Yeltsin's inner circle intends to thwart the election — again, by citing a possible worsening of his health.

During Yeltsin's trips to Yekaterinburg and Belgorod he produced an impression as a stress-resistant person, although this may have been achieved at a high psychological and physiological cost. Medical experts attribute the sudden loss of voice during his speech in Yekaterinburg to the effects of an extreme dose of medication. It is for this reason, think the specialists, that it is so important to follow the chronicle of his illnesses in parallel with the chronicle of the campaign goings-on.

A group of medical experts has drawn up a forecast of the Russian president's health for the period of the election campaign. It is based on a computerized program of Boris Yeltsin's biorhythms and the known symptoms of his chronic diseases.

The president is to go through ups and downs in physical, emotional, and intellectual activity. One abrupt downturn falls in the period from 13 to 20 May. Since a body's adaptive capabilities weaken in the spring, one cannot rule out development of an acute condition in his chronic diseases. (In this particular case, ateriosclerotic changes.)

It is essential to take account of the astro-meteorological forecasts for May: an increase in solar activity and a step-up in atmospheric processes. Taken together, it all suggests that the period from 15 April to 20 May will be unfavorable for Boris Yeltsin's health. This viewpoint was circulated by the mass media.

But there are other, more competent and more trustworthy assessments. We are referring to the views of doctors and psychologists who constantly accompany the president in all his electoral tours of the country.

Their diagnosis shows that even after he was released from the Central Clinical Hospital at the end of 1995, Yeltsin displayed left-hemispheric reactions, right-side asymmetry, the dominance of right-hand gestures — possibly, because of the deficiency of his left hand. He still produces the impression of a man who has gone through a stroke. The existence of a pronounced nasolabial fold is proof of irregularities in the functioning of his cardiovascular system.

The asymmetry of his facial muscles, the smoothed over nasolabial fold on the right-hand side, the tendency to turn his whole body while walking, and the calcification of his shoulder girdle, the detachment of his hands from the body, a slow motility, a certain lack of synchroneity between his speech and gestures, staccato speech — with the intonation dying down by the end of the phrase regardless of its meaning — all indicate persistent ischemic irregularities in the central nervous system or the consequences of a cerebral insult.

The swift reddening of his face, slight tremor, edemas in case of weariness or nervous strain are proof of a weak nervous [involuntary] vegeto-vascular system or a hypertonic-type vegeto-vascular dystonia, hypertension, and insufficient blood circulation relating to cardiac pathology.

What should be pointed out in particular is the president's indistinct pronunciation; that is, the "blurred" nature of his speech at the level of the man in the street, which, together with the above symptoms, produces the impression of alcoholism. Evidently, it is the unsatisfactory somatic state that produces the overall impression of strain and awkwardness, which is unacceptable for mass consciousness.

Also worrying are increasingly frequent symptoms of vascular epilexy [as published] in Yeltsin. In the process of communication with him there have been occasions where he suddenly terminates the conversation, his eyes lose their expression of intelligence, and his arm trembles considerably for one or two minutes as if the patient were suffering from Parkinson's disease. To all appearances, this is a consequence of chronic cerebrovascular insufficiency (progressing arteriosclerosis of the brain vessels). At the same time, such symptoms can be interpreted as the signal of yet another approaching insult or infarction, or the existence of a brain tumor.

As for the last suggestion, that Yeltsin could have a tumor, it cannot but be recalled that the brain scan carried out by foreign specialists in the early 1990's showed the existence of such a tumor, noting that its negative consequences were to come to a head precisely in 1995-1996. This opinion, classified as "top secret," was stored in the KGB safes on Lubyanka and was destroyed in August 1991. But data about that have been kept by the U.S. secret services, which have covertly diagnosed the Russian president's health on a periodic basis during his U.S. visits throughout these years. In autumn 1995 they used for this purpose up-to-date computer systems, which enabled them to reveal the symptoms of an approaching infarction — a prediction that came true after his return to Moscow. Competent sources in the United States report that the Americans have currently stepped up their operations in this area by using state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. For instance, the Presidential Security Service recently stopped such an attempt at one of the president's news conferences in Moscow. The same sources signal that the White House has, through confidential channels, advised the chiefs of U.S. companies and financial groups operating in Russia of the need to leave this country a week before 16 June of this year. One reason for this warning is, among other things, the threat of mass disturbances in connection with predicted complications in Yeltsin's health.

Given that, chiefs of a number of large Russian banks and financial-industrial groups, who have learned about this directive, have been taking steps to purchase information about the actual state of his health so as to have time "to move" their financial assets to a safer place in case of a crisis or other unfavorable changes.

Russia: Chernomyrdin, Zyuganov Hold 'Closed-Door' Meeting

LD3004151096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1439 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Gennadiy Yezhov, Artem Protasenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin today had a closed-door working meeting with Gennadiy Zyuganov, the communist leader and major presidential candidate.

The meeting was held in the government building after Chernomyrdin had returned from the funeral of his personal physician Dmitriy Nechayev.

Informed sources told Itar-Tass that Chernomyrdin and Zyuganov had discussed the socio-political situation in Russia on the eve the presidential election due on June 16.

This meeting was paralleled by a regular meeting of the Chernomyrdin-chaired state commission for settlement in Chechnya. The commission met to discuss organisational aspects of the peace talks whose start is considered after Chechnya's separatist camp announces its new leader.

Also discussed were measures to avert possible acts of terror by Chechen rebels, the tightening of border guarding in the North Caucausus region and helping out rebel-held hostages and POWs.

Russia: Businessmen Appeal to Politicians for Compromise

LD3004153996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1435 GMT 30 Apr 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [no dateline as received] President Boris Yeltsin is well aware of a recent appeal by a group of Russian businessmen who called on the country's politicians for compromise ahead of the June presidential election in a bid to save Russia as a state, Kremlin spokesman Sergey Medvedev told Interfax on Tuesday.

He said Yeltsin had already met representatives of the support group signing the appeal.

The spokesman said the Russian leader was awaiting how the initiative would evolve while conducting broad political consultations on all level.

In their appeal issued on April 26, leading Russian businessmen and bankers called on intellectuals, the military, the government and parliament, police and the mass media who concentrate power in their hands and on whom the country's future depends for concerted effort in searches of political compromise which can help avert bitter conflicts threatening the basic interests of Russia and its statehood.

They spoke of sharing the patriots' serious concern at the destiny of Russia as a historic union of peoples which the Russian have always played a gathering role. But they also called to discern between a constructive policy and political speculations on the national theme.

The appeal says that because of activities by some political figures and parties, the word democracy is now perceived as almost a synonym of being anti-Russian. The authors of the appeal say trampling on the Russian and Soviet history and all what the Russians deem sacred must be rejected and stopped.

At the same time, they warn against attempts to discredit the great ideas of freedom, civilization, justice and truth as the pillars of the genuine democracy.

They say it will be a serious danger if the Communists may try to stage an ideological comeback after winning the presidential election. "We understand the Communists and recognize their political role of expressing the interests of social groups who suffered in the course of hard and at times, mistaken reforms", the appeal says. But it says the Communists should not insist that the society renounce the agonizing achievements of the past decade. As they condemn the historical results of the period and accuse all other forces of fatal steps, the Communists must as a minimum share the responsibility for the break up of the Soviet Union, say the Russian businessmen.

IF Note: Among 13 signatories to the appeal are Chairman of Menatep Bank Board of Directors Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, President of LOGOVAZ group Boris Berezovskiy, Chairman of the Most Board of Directors Vladimir Gusinskiy, President of Stoclichniy Savings Bank Alexander Smolensky, President of YUKOS oil company Sergei Muravlenko and AvtoVaz President Aleksey Nikolayev.

Pro-Russia presidential candidate Gennadiy Zyuganov at a meeting with the signatories on Tuesday said his alliance would meet soon to discuss how to respond to their appeal.

He spoke of understanding the businessmen's concern about the Russian economy.

Zyuganov said he and the signatories had discussed the issues raised in the appeal and exchanged views on the state of the Russian economy, finances and industrial management. He described the meeting as useful.

Zyuganov said the Russian Communist Party, CPRF, has always considered these problems to be vital and sent its leader called "The Country in Danger" a long time ago. "We are all concerned what measures must be taken to make the economy and finances work," he said.

On the signatories' call for dialogue between different political forces, Zyuganov said "we have always favored dialogue." He spoke of putting forward a proposal in the State Duma a year ago that the three branches of government hold regular consultations and take measured decisions to the benefit of the country.

One other CPRF leader and head of the State Duma security committee Viktor Ilyukhin lauded the outcome of the meeting but he did not elaborate apart from saying that the businessmen's proposals needed further scrutiny.

At a news conference on Tuesday, he did not rule out the introduction of a state of emergency in the country. Nor does he rule out the possibility that Yeltsin may use force to remain in office.

He said his gloomy forecast follows legal uncertainties about the handover of power. In this connection, Ilyukhin expressed satisfaction that the Duma has managed to pass in the first reading a bill on the inauguration of a new president in a last minute attempt before parliamentary recess.

He believes national reconciliation could be achieved by the formation of a State Council, a proposal the Communists put forward at the end of last year. Ilyukhin said such a body standing above state structures must compromise representatives of the two houses of parliament, presidential structures and the leaders of major parties and movements.

He says that a parliamentary resolution and an appropriate presidential decree could serve as the legal groundwork to form such a council. He regrets that the CPRF's move has failed to evoke a positive response from the higher echelons of power.

Russia: Zyuganov Discusses Issues With 13 Entrepreneurs

LD3004181696 Moscow NTV in Russian 1500 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Video report by correspondent Ernest Matskyavichyus — from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Russian Communist Party [CPRF] Chairman Gennadiy Zyuganov, who has already been registered as a presidential candidate, had a meeting today with the authors of the statement by 13 entrepreneurs and bankers who signed an open letter appealing to all leading politicians in the country to start a dialogue. To judge by all events, Zyuganov and his comrades at arms have not yet decided on this, but plan to do so in the near future. A report from Ernest Matskyavichyus.

[Matskyavichyus, over video of journalists mobbing besuited men emerging from room] This morning entrepreneurs, the authors of the so-called appeal of the 13, had a meeting in the State Duma with one of those to whom their message was addressed — Gennadiy Zyuganov. The content of their conversation, which went on behind closed doors for more than an hour and a half, can be judged mainly from the responses of the participants who left the CPRF faction rooms. The representatives of business circles were restrained in their comments on the results of the conversation that took place.

[Unidentified man] The meeting went splendidly.

[Journalist] What did you talk about?

[Unidentified man] About our appeal.

[Journalist] How did Zyuganov react?

[Unidentified man] That's a question for Zyuganov.

[Second journalist] What steps do you plan to take now?

[Unidentified man] We plan to keep working.

[Matskyavichyus] The chairman of the CPRF was rather more forthcoming to journalists. He declared that he shares the entrepreneurs' concern for the fate of Russia and its economy, and made it clear that he was satisfied with the meeting with his class enemies.

[Zyuganov] We wanted to explain our view on what is happening and our attitude to their appeal. I published my letter on this today, with a number of suggestions. As for compromises and how to bring them about, that is the task of politicians, not businessmen.

[Matskyavichyus] Are you prepared to meet Yeltsin?

[Zyuganov] We said a long time ago that we were ready to hold consultations with all political forces operating today, on just two conditions: the prosperity of the fatherland, and peace in it.

[Matskyavichyus] Zyuganov said that the headquarters of the bloc of national patriotic forces will soon hold a session at which they will discuss all the bankers' proposals and decide how to react to them.

Meanwhile, the president's press secretary, Sergey Medvedev, has said that the president is well informed about the ideas of the 13 major entrepreneurs in the country, has met representatives of the group, and is now waiting to see how their initiative will develop further.

Ernest Matskyavichyus, Leonid Pridorogin, NTV Television company.

Russia: Zyuganov Replies to 'Appeal of the 13'

MM3004140796 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 1

[Undated open letter from popular-patriotic coalition presidential candidate G.A. Zyuganov to the authors of the "Appeal of the 13": "Before the Country"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To: B.A. Berezovskiy, president of the "LogoVAZ" group; V.A. Gorodilov, chairman of the Siberian Oil Company Board; V.A. Gusinskiy, chairman of the Most Group Board of Directors; A.N. Dundukov, president of the Yakovlev Design Bureau; N.B. Mikhaylov, president of the "Vympel" MAK [abbreviation unknown]; S.V. Muravlenko, president of the "Yukos" oil company; L.B. Nevzlin, president of the Rosprom company; A.V. Nikolayev, president and general director of the "AvtoVAZ" Joint-Stock Company; D.L. Orlov, chairman of the "Vozrozhdeniye" Design Bureau Board; V.O. Potanin, president of the "Oneksimbank" Joint-Stock Bank; A.P. Smolenskiy, president of the "Stolichnyy Bank Sberezheniy" Joint-Stock Bank; M.M. Fridman, chairman of the Alfa-Gruppa Consortium Board of Directors; and M.B. Khodorkovskiy, chairman of the "Menatep" Bank Board of Directors.

Esteemed gentlemen!

I have studied very carefully the text of your appeal "We Must Break the Deadlock!" Although, as is clear from the text, it is not addressed to me personally as leader of the popular-patriotic bloc which unites more than 200 political parties, public organizations, movements, and creative, professional, veterans', and youth unions, I nevertheless considered it expedient to state publicly that I understand the reasons for your anxiety and also that I share your concern for our homeland's future, its territorial integrity, and its security.

I also welcome the initiative of the group of entrepreneurs that published the appeal because it builds on and reinforces our repeated calls to normalize the situation in the country and to guarantee the development of the democratic process both before and after 16 June. It emerges in the wake of the publication of the "Appeal of the 13" that our aspiration to find ways to stabilize the country and maintain peace and civil accord in society coincides with the intentions of one of the most influential groups of Russians entrepreneurs.

It is well known that the fundamentals of democracy lie in the sacred right of each people to free choice. The more free, open, and honest the decision being made and the greater the number of people who are party to it, the firmer the political and legal basis of the state structure and the more legitimate all measures and actions which will be undertaken on this basis.

In other words, the boosting and strengthening of sociopolitical stability are only possible through the consistent and rigorous observance of all democratic procedures.

We agree that the greatest problem on our country's agenda today is to guarantee that people's basic vital interests are secured, not least when power is handed over from one political force to another, and to produce guarantees as much in the wider public context as in the narrower personal context.

I hope that these proposals will meet with due understanding. In all civilized countries, one of the main conditions for the democratic functioning of the electoral process is the public, open, and I would say, competitive, presentation of the views and program planks of contenders for the highest office of state.

This is why I, as the presidential candidate representing the broad popular-patriotic coalition, once more propose that a meeting between myself and the incumbent president and candidate for this post B.N. Yeltsin be broadcast live on television. By outlining and discussing before the whole country and world our views on the key issues of life in Russia at this meeting, we could give the most important moral and political guarantees for the normal and legal conduct of the election race.

It is our deep conviction that three interconnected measures might serve as such guarantees that are capable of preventing any destabilizing vacillation.

First, the adoption of amendments to the Constitution, by which the range of the president's "emergency" rights and powers would be curtailed.

Second, the extension of the Federal Assembly's powers, not least in the appointment of the government and the monitoring of its activities. At the same time, of course, the government's powers and responsibilities should also be greatly extended.

Third, the firm obligation to hold, after the presidential election and in accordance with the law, direct elections of the leaders of local administrations and local representative organs.

All these measures would, as a package, serve to increase political stability in Russia and would also make it possible to carry out reforms on the basis of the rigorous observance of the state and national interests of the country and the majority of its people.

Esteemed gentlemen!

Today, in the course of the election campaign, I meet with representatives of the most diverse social groups and leaders of political parties and movements. I propose that a meeting be held with a wide range of entrepreneurs, including the authors of the "Appeal of the 13," for an open, direct, and honest discussion of the economic, social, political, and moral problems associated with extricating the country from the current crisis and guaranteeing the future development of our fatherland.

Russia: Businessmen's Political Plan Needs Bona Fides

MM3004160296 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 2

["Observer's Opinion on the 'Statement of Thirteen'" by Aleksandr Frolov: "A Chance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last Saturday a number of central newspapers, including SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, published a political statement by 13 leading Russian business representatives. It was addressed to the main rival political groupings and has the objective of warning them of the possible fatal consequences for Russian statehood of the continuation and deepening of confrontation.

The most important point in the statement, in my view, is the recognition (albeit extremely belated) that the Communists are a legitimate and equal force in the political arena. This step can only be welcomed since history teaches that a refusal and inability to heed obvious realities has never done anybody any good.

A second fundamental point is the desire to spur Russian politicians toward "extremely serious reciprocal concessions, strategic political accords, and the enshrining of such in law." The specific content of the proposed compromise is not disclosed. And whereas a demand to abandon "attempts at ideological revenge" is put directly to the Communists, the question of what steps the opposite side should take in return is left not completely clear. At the same time, compromise is compromise, which presupposes reciprocity.

Nevertheless the very idea of compromise is perfectly sensible and fits completely in with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation's program principles of peacefully and nonviolently bringing the country out of its current catastrophic state. To prove it you only have to cite Gennadiy Zyuganov's election platform:

"People are being intimated with the prospect that the opposition, on coming to power, will start political reprisals against political opponents and dissidents. For the umpteenth time I state in all earnestness: We will support all who wish to work honestly to augment the wealth of the country and their own affluence. There will be no redistribution on ideological grounds or persecution for political motives. We are against not only repression but also historical vengeance. History should be studied, not denigrated.

"Our objective is to utilize all society's forces to overcome the national catastrophe and protect human rights. But this is impossible without broad social dialogue, freedom of action for political parties, freedom of opinion and faith, and freedom of information.

"In the course of such a dialogue we are prepared to offer a broad compromise on the basis of the acknowledgment that nothing comes above the interests of the Fatherland and peace. Many old transgressions will be forgiven those who come to realize this and work for the rebirth of a great Russia."

As we can see, what we have here is not only an offer of compromise but also an extremely clear articulation of the commitments which the people's patriotic forces will assume if they win the presidential elections. The presidential candidate from the people's patriotic forces enunciated all these points back on 17 March in front of a 3,000-strong audience in the presence of dozens of television cameras and hundreds of press journalists. And if they are insufficiently well known to even such informed people are the authors of the "Statement of the Thirteen," it is clearly not the opposition's fault. Thus here too a failure to keep up with the course of events has again been committed. Taking note of the other side's commitments and getting down to formulating their own is somewhat overdue. But better late than never.

The third key point was the declaration of a readiness for serious political action. "We don't want to get involved in debilitating and futile didactics!" the statement says. "Those who encroach on Russian statehood by gambling on ideological revanchism and social confrontation should realize that Russia's entrepreneurs have **the necessary resources and will** (my emphasis — A.F.) to influence both unscrupulous and excessively uncompromising politicians."

There is indisputably only one message in this point — namely that business has the necessary resources and will. And the authors should in no way be condemned for their emphatically tough tone. Everything is correct. Politics is not an occupation for the weak-nerved, and compromises in politics are concluded not on the basis of verbal "consensus" but on the basis of the balance of **actual forces.** In this connection it seems superfluous to mention that it is not only businessmen who have "the necessary resources and will" — these are among the points of departure for tackling the task to be resolved.

But the rest raises questions. Conceptually this tough warning seems to be aimed at both opposing political sides and made from the standpoint of a so-called third force as yet remaining "above the fray." It is in this spirit that certain publications have hastened to interpret the statement. But in practice this warning is aimed primarily at the Communists and the people's patriotic opposition as a whole. The specific wording prompts precisely this conclusion.

This means that the "Group of 13" has to be regarded not as a court of arbitration in a dispute between parties, not as a mediator in concluding a compromise, but as one of the parties, and one which is very close to the ruling regime and, to be frank, backs the president and the government. That is by no means a complaint. On the contrary, it is very encouraging that circles whose interests are articulated by the "party of power" have started to become awarke of certain realities and to ponder the consequences of the state policy currently being pursued.

It would be good if further ponderings on this subject were to lead to the conclusion that the social confrontation is rooted not only and not even so much in politics and ideology as in economics. "We must all be aware," G. Zyuganov's election platform states, "that the greatest threat to civil peace and the country's security lies in the deepening chasm between rich and poor, when a minority is getting rich not by augmenting national wealth but by robbing the majority. The further growth of group selfishness will unavoidably lead to a social explosion with the most destructive consequences."

It seems to me that the authors of the statement would like to interpret the monstrous social stratification and impoverishment of the majority of the population as no more than the "painful social costs" of the reforms, as a negative side effect, as the heavy but inevitable price of "progress." This is a point where it would be permissible to disagree with such a formalistic and superficial view of things.

Admittedly it is well known that almost all revolutions and progressive reforms in history have cost peoples an extremely high price. But the progress of the reform currently being experienced by Russia convinces you that that the social stratification, which exceeds all limits of public safety, the robbery of the majority of the people, and the gradual extinction of the population are all not "costs" or "side effects" of the reforms but "the means to implement them, their substance and objective." This objective is as clear as daylight: creating a "strategic owner" of the means of production and, alongside, a class of property-less owners of their own labor. Plus the expedited resettlement to the graveyard of everybody else who does not fit into the new scheme of social relationships. And the means of achieving the objective lies not in developing and modernizing production but in cutting it back and privatizing the production structure. Not in increasing public wealth but in primitively redistributing it in a situation of a general substantial decline in its size.

Precisely this entitles the opposition to categorically assert that the real reforms which the country vitally needs **have still not even started.** This is precisely why it is insisting not on the "modification" of the present reforms but on a change of course — a change in their **objective and the content and means of implementing** them. Seeing this as an attempt at "ideological revenge" means hopelessly confusing everything since there is not a hint of any particular "ideology" here, just a statement of facts testifying that the continuation of the reforms in the same vein will lead to a social explosion. In my view it is by no means necessary to be a Marxist or an existentialist to take this on board.

It is precisely the question of the content of reforms which must become the subject of discussion and possible agreement. A compromise limited only to political matters (see below) but not backed up with definite socioeconomic moves is not a compromise but an unscrupulous conspiracy which will in any case not stop the growth of confrontation. Here too the captains of big business are operating as a contracting party bearing virtually the biggest share of responsibility. If they are really worried about the threat of further confrontation they should speedily do at least the following, in my view.

First, poor people incapable of work because of their age or state of health should disappear from the streets of out cities. How this will be done — through voluntary self-taxation in favor of the Pension Fund or some other method — is a technical matter. But the sharing of acquired wealth will have to come one way or another, since it is 80 percent the fruit of not present but past labor, the labor of people who today are compelled to beg for alms and rummage in trash cans. This is both a material and a moral duty to the older generation. And until it is discharged, it is necessary to moderate the demand for limousines, mansions, golf courses, and the many other things else without which the "new Russian" cannot conceive of his existence....

Second, the leakage of Russian capital abroad must stop and the gradual return of capital already taken out of Russia must start. It must start being invested in sectors of production which, even if they are less profitable or do not promise an immediate return, are nonetheless vitally important for the country's independence and security.

Neither of the two demands involve anything supernatural or unfeasible for those who really have **the necessary resources and will.** All it is is a check that both the former and the latter exist. In exchange for this, the possible future authorities must grant additional guarantees to productive capital if those already made (and cited in this article) prove insufficient.

I do not know whether proof is needed that in the event of the implementation of these measures a large part of the threat of destructive confrontation would be removed. And a definite socioeconomic foundation would simultaneously be laid for achieving a properly political compromise.

The statement's authors see the main threat to the state system and peace in society in the fact that whoever comes to power as a result of the presidential elections — a "Red" or a "White" — in any event he will be the president of a minority or at best a negligible majority. And this will set "an enormous section of society" against him and compel him to resort to violence and repression in order to achieve his objective.

In general it is possible to agree with the prediction that no newly elected president will have an overwhelming majority of voters behind him. But does this imply? It implies that the president's gigantic powers, equivalent to autocracy, are becoming the main threat to democracy. In a divided society a regime of uncontrolled presidential power is the worst of all possible options since it indeed makes it possible for a minority to commit violence against the majority with all the ensuing consequences, up to and including civil war.

By an eternal irony of history the people most worried by our authoritarian constitution at this time are they very ones who used to support it most ardently. The sword is two-edged, it transpires. But the opposition, which tomorrow could be holding it in its hands, has no intention of taking malicious pleasure in this. On the contrary, it has called and continues to call for it to be tamed.

The sensible way out is to radically curb the powers of the executive branch by means of tough control on the part of the representative, **collegial** branch of power. The latter by its very nature can only operate effectively by achieving a certain compromise among the forces represented in it. And to ensure that this representativeness is broader, it would indeed be possible in our conditions to lower the threshold for political parties' admission to parliament from 5 to, say, 3 or 2 percent.

Ideally, what Russia needs today in order to minimize the danger of a destructive confrontation in the sphere of power is a constitutional regime which is not an elected monarchy (like now) but a parliamentary republic. The government should be exclusively formed by parliament. And if it demonstrated an inability to do so, after the third unsuccessful attempt, say, it would be subject to dissolution and early elections. Figuratively speaking, what is needed is a regime of "constitutional enforcement of compromise." It is in these considerations of principle, not antipathy for B. Yeltsin personally, that the opposition's negative attitude to the institution of presidential power is rooted.

The preservation of civil peace requires in-depth constitutional reform. It cannot be effected without preparation. But right now what is needed from all the realistic contenders for the presidency is guarantees, in the event of their being elected, of their voluntary compliance with principles which, although not inscribed in the Constitution; are essential for the more democratic functioning of the state machine. For his part G. Zyuganov has already assumed precise commitments on this score. Let me again cite his election platform: "No minister should be appointed without the agreement of the legislative branch. No Russia-wide program will start operating until it has received the approval of parliament and the higher intellectual council. For their part parliament and deputies must be under the control of and accountable to voters." It is now the other contenders' turn.

Finally, on the subject of the final condition needed for the search for compromise to succeed. It must take place in a situation of maximum openness and society being fully informed about the real views and positions of all sides. The mass media under their control will have to sharply broaden their coverage of the opponents viewpoint — up to and including the reciprocal reprinting of the most fundamental items. Keeping quiet, misrepresenting, distorting and other means of informational and psychological warfare must be taken completely out of circulation.

That, in my view, is the minimum necessary to achieve some kind of compromise. It will not eliminate the social contradictions and take away all the tension, but it would create a framework in which contradictions would get a chance to be resolved peacefully and nonviolently. Everybody who is seriously concerned for the fate of the Russian people and Russian statehood has no right to let this chance go by.

Russia: Col. Gen. Barynkin Interviewed on NATO Threat, Allies

MM2904120496 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 26 Apr 96 p 2

[Interview with Dr. of Military Sciences Colonel General Viktor Barynkin, first deputy chief of Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff and chief of General Staff Main Operations Directorate, by Oleg Falichev under the "Russia's Interests" rubric; place and date not given: "Where To Look for Allies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Quite a few well-known military chiefs, politicians, and public figures have written in KRASNAYA ZVEZDA recently about problems of reforming the Russian Federation Armed Forces. A number of proposals and ideas have been advanced and have elicited a response from interested power departments and government structures. Mindful of the acute and ambiguous nature of the topic, the editorial office has decided to continue the debate on questions of geopolitics, national security, and military organizational development in the Russian Federation.

Our interlocutor today is Dr. of Military Sciences Colonel General Viktor Barynkin.

From KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's file: He was born in the city of Melenki, Vladimir Oblast, in 1946. He graduated from the Moscow Higher Combined-Arms Command School, the M.V. Frunze Military Academy, and the General Staff Military Academy. From 1968 he held command posts ranging from platoon commander to chief of staff and first deputy commander of a combined-arms army. From 1986 through 1988 he was commander of the 108th Motorized Rifle Division in Afghanistan. From 1991 he held leadership posts in the General Staff Main Operations Directorate. In 1992 a Russian Federation presidential edict appointed him chief of the General Staff Main Operations Directorate. Since February 1996 he has simultaneously been first deputy chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff.

[Falichev] Viktor Mikhaylovich, military people know how a great deal in a combat situation sometimes depends on the operations officer. For the fate of a whole operation and people's lives are frequently at stake, figuratively speaking. What does the General Staff Main Operations Directorate do in peacetime?

[Barynkin] I perceive a certain subtext to your question.... Indeed, by no means everyone knows what one of the most important structural subdivisions of the General Staff of a nuclear power might be working on with the ending of the Cold War. But, believe you me, we have more than enough tasks. So as not to fatigue readers by listing them, I shall briefly state that the Main Operations Directorate is the General Staff's leading organ, without whose participation not a single problem that is at all important pertaining to the organizational development, training, and planning the use of the Armed Forces can be resolved.

[Falichev] Some time ago this opinion established itself in the awareness of our citizens: No one threatens Russia anymore. Since this is so, they say, why do we need powerful Armed Forces, which in the age of panhuman values constitute such a monster in the way of progressive transformations and economic reforms? Is there, maybe, some fundamental truth here?

[Barynkin] It cannot be denied that positive changes in the world have resulted in the destruction of the bipolar model of international relations which took shape after World War II. We have stopped looking at each other through gunsights, and the image of the enemy has vanished — at which we can only rejoice. But the new model of interstate relations is still taking shape, and its insufficiently definite nature is already affecting regional stability. Alas, the manifestation of fresh contradictions, the exacerbation of old ones, and the increased likelihood of conflicts arising on the basis of them on varying scales are leading to an increase in general tension and naturally pose a threat to Russia's national security.

I shall speak frankly. At the present time we are concerned about the activation of the processes of the North Atlantic alliance being joined by certain Central and East European states and of its eastward expansion. NATO does not hide its intention of substantially reducing Russia's nuclear and conventional arms and weakening its military-industrial complex. Add to this a number of other negative processes in direct proximity to our borders. In particular, the growing ties between the leading countries in western and southern regions and those states of the near abroad which try to pursue a policy with an anti-Russian thrust. Draw your own conclusions.

Proceeding from this, we define the threats which Russia is already encountering or might encounter in the future. Little is said or written about this at present. Therefore I shall speak of them in greater detail.

In the political sphere there are:

— the actions of certain states and nationalist movements to undermine Russia's territorial integrity and to weaken the Russian Federation's ties with the former USSR republics, Central and East European countries, and also states in regions of our traditional cooperation;

— territorial claims on Russia;

— attempts to debar the Russian Federation from resolving key international problems and from the activities of international organizations.

In the economic sphere:

— the desire to weaken the Russian Federation's economic independence and its technological and industrial potential and to make it a fuel and raw materials appendage of the world's leading countries;

— the limitation of Russia's presence on foreign markets and, in the long term, its ouster from them, and active resistance to its equitable participation in international financial-economic and trade organizations.

In the military sphere:

— the preservation of real and potential hotbeds of armed conflicts in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders;

— the proliferation of nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery vehicles, and the latest military technologies in conjunction with attempts by individual countries to use them for their own mercenary ends;

— the existence in a number of states of armed forces which possess both nuclear weapons and quite a large number of modern conventional arms, particularly high-precision ones.

Understand: We are talking of threats to the new democratic Russia. They have not been invented, but are real. Does this not surprise you?

[Falichev] It is hard to disagree with all this. But why is it that, having lost the communist threat from the East, the leading Western states have increased appropriations for military needs? Why is NATO seeking to expand precisely eastward and not, for example, southward?

[Barynkin] There really has been a tendency recently for a number of Western countries to increase military expenditure. The U.S. Defense Department budget for

FY1996 has increased appropriations under classes associated with the creation of the latest weapons and military hardware. In particular, $2.2 billion has been allocated to the program to develop the F-22 tactical fighter. Expenditure on improving the national air defense system has increased by $529 million (over and above the $2.9 billion requested by the administration). France, Britain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey have increased expenditure on military needs.

As regards NATO's expansion plans by means of adding the Baltic and Central and East European countries, in our opinion this process leads not to deeper all-European integration but, rather, to Russia's political isolation. Why? Because a fundamentally new situation could take shape on the continent, which will significantly affect Russia's national interests and, accordingly, will require commensurate steps to protect them. The minister of defense spoke of the possible nature of these steps last November.

[Falichev] Viktor Mikhaylovich, you mentioned Russia's national interests. What, after all, are they? Whom can we now regard as potential allies, and whom as posing a military danger?

[Barynkin] The whole point is that the traditional division of countries into possible enemies, allies, and neutral states is now highly problematic. Russia and the CIS on the one hand and the United States and NATO on the other have officially pledged not to regard each other as enemies. But these declarations have not, I will repeat, been able to resolve all the contradictions that have accumulated in the world.

The definition of the Russian Federation's allies and enemies must not only be based on conclusions from the specific military-political situation but also take account of the states' long-term interests and their coincidence or contrast in the historical aspect. The policy of the majority of East European countries — the USSR's former partners in the Warsaw Pact and the Baltic states — clearly manifests a desire to obtain guarantees of security precisely from NATO. But they regard their eastern neighbor — Russia — as a source of risks and dangers. Therefore, in the event of a conflict situation arising in Europe, we cannot rule out the possibility that a number of them will support NATO. In the south a military-political alliance of Muslim states with an anti-Russian thrust could become a source of danger to the Russian Federation's national interests.

In the east the situation is characterized by less likelihood of exacerbation, although the emergence of any of the possible versions of a conflict situation between the Russian Federation and the leading states of the region also should not be ruled out. Therefore Russia should evidently seek its allies primarily among the CIS countries that are party to the Collective Security Treaty.

[Falichev] If we recall in this connection our internal Army problems, why do you think the military reform has begun to falter? Do you have any prescriptions for rectifying the situation?

[Barynkin] We must all finally realize that the military reform is not a one-act play but requires lengthy work by all organs of state power on many planes. Unfortunately, many people today regard the concepts "military reform" and "reforming of the Armed Forces" as synonymous — which is fundamentally wrong. In this connection the majority of the questions that are put to the Army and Navy leadership, including yours, go beyond the competence of the Ministry of Defense. As for improving the structure and composition of the Armed Forces, this is our sphere of activity.

Abstracting ourselves from the financial and economic factor as the main cause having a negative effect on the reforming of the Armed Forces, we see the weakness of the legislative base of military organizational development as the next cause. As a result, the tasks, functions, and responsibility of the subjects of military organizational development (federal ministries and departments, the leadership of the Federation's components) are eroded and nonspecific.

I will emphasize once again: Military organizational development is the business of the whole state. For this, proposals for each area of military organizational development, including the reforming of the Armed Forces, must be worked out on the basis of a conceptual document defining the aims and tasks of transformations of the Russian Federation's military organization. At the same time these documents, I will emphasize, need the status of federal targeted programs.

[Falichev] How do you see the role of the General Staff in this?

[Barynkin] It is, of course, the prerogative of the president and government of the Russian Federation to resolve the whole range of questions of military organizational development in the Russian Federation. It seems to me that the coordinating role must belong to the General Staff. Specific functions have been defined for it in corresponding Russian Federation presidential edicts. In particular, the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff directs the development of the military infrastructure and the operational equipping of the country's territory and coordinates the activities of the Russian Federation ministries and departments which have troops resolving defense tasks....

The General Staff has now mounted work to coordinate the preparation and agreeing of military organizational development plans in the Russian Federation. But, unfortunately, the lack of a number of federal laws and of a clear state policy on military organizational development prevents us from acting more efficiently. At the same time this enables every power ministry and department to plan and implement the development of their own troops, based only on their own view of the problems of ensuring military security. This is manifested, for example, in the desire to create even their own rear and technical support systems in regions (when other ministries' repair enterprises are standing idle or working below full capacity). But we are particularly concerned about the tendency to form units and combined units which in point of fact duplicate the tasks of analogous structures in the Armed Forces. This is to the state's economic cost. Most importantly, it leads to a systematic increase in the overall strength of the Russian Federation's "other troops" when the Army and Navy are being cut back wholesale. One wonders why this is being done.

This cannot continue. Therefore, in our view, there has long been an urgent need to bring the new Law "On Defense" into effect as quickly as possible and to define in legislation the single organ to coordinate the organizational development of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces and "other troops" and to plan their use in wartime. It is my profound conviction that the General Staff can and must be that organ, since it has the appropriate material base and highly trained specialists and is capable of working efficiently along with other ministries and departments.

I should also like to take this opportunity to ask State Duma deputies, our veterans, representatives of military science, and all who care about the fate of Russia and its Armed Forces: Send your proposals on military organizational development to the General Staff or bring your plans to us. They will be studied attentively.

[Falichev] In conclusion, Viktor Mikhaylovich, permit me to ask a question which might not be to the point. Evidently, by no means every General Staff officer can boast that he has subscribed to KRASNAYA ZVEZDA. But you, as far as is known, not only regularly read but also subscribe to what would seem to be your own, purely departmental newspaper. What lies behind this?

[Barynkin] I believe that a military leader at any level, however actively he works, simply cannot cover the whole spectrum of Army life, instantly perceive changes in people's mood.... Not to mention news from other states' armies. You cannot manage here without the military press. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA is essentially the only operational press organ of the Ministry of Defense. I have never lost my interest in the chief military newspaper. So I shall continue to wish your collective creative finds and journalistic successes.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Objects To Arrest of Foreign 'Dissidents'

MM0105101396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

["Russian Federation State Duma Statement on Responsibility for the Extradition to Foreign States of People Being Persecuted for Their Political Beliefs" — ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA headline; from the "Documents" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma was alarmed to receive the information about the arrests carried out in Moscow city in the last few days of eminent Azerbaijani opposition figures who had found refuge on Russian Federation territory from politically motivated persecution by the Azerbaijani Republic authorities. The Russian Federation internal affairs organs' detention of former Azerbaijani President A.N. Mutalibov and former Azerbaijani Defense Minister R.G. Kaziyev, as well as the urgent talks on the extradition of the said persons which began immediately after this between senior Russian Federation General Prosecutor's Office officials and the Azerbaijani side, testify to ongoing, coordinated action to remove political opponents of the current Azerbaijani state leadership, in which besides the Azerbaijani Republic authorities senior Russian Federation officials without whose authority the said actions would have been impossible are taking part. This is an exceptionally dangerous precedent, which could be followed by the detention and extradition of other former Azerbaijani leaders and leaders of the Georgian, Afghan, and other states' political opposition currently in Russia.

The State Duma regards what is happening as a gross violation of Article 63 (Section 2) of the Russian Federation Constitution, according to which "the Russian Federation does not allow the extradition to other states of people being persecuted for their political beliefs," and of the norms of international law, specifically Article 14, Paragraph 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also believe that references to treaties on legal assistance existing between the Russian Federation and the Azerbaijani Republic are invalid, since it is a question not of extraditing criminals but of handing over to a foreign state political dissidents who in this case could be subjected to repressive measures up to and including the forfeit of their lives. This contradicts generally accepted principles of humanity and world practices.

The State Duma believes that the Russian Federation officials who have committed acts associated with the extradition to foreign states of people being persecuted for their political beliefs should be held responsible for what they have done in accordance with existing Russian Federation legislation.

The State Duma demands a thorough investigation of the facts surrounding Russian officials' unlawful detention of A.N. Mutalibov and other Azerbaijani political figures with a view to subsequent extradition to the Azerbaijani authorities, the publication of the names of the instigators and perpetrators of this shameful act, and the severe punishment of the culprits up to and including criminal prosecution.

[Dated] Moscow, 17 April 1996

Russia: Communists To Submit Bill Returning Hammer, Sickle to Flag

MK3004142096 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Yevgeniy Yuryev: "Hammer on the Left, Sickle on the Right: That's Our Russian Coat of Arms"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The ceremony of the inauguration of the newly elected president, set out in great detail in a draft law recently approved by the Duma on first reading, envisions, in addition to swearing-in, a transfer of the trappings of presidential power: a flag and seal with the national emblem. The Communists believe that the official trappings of the new president should be a red flag, and a hammer and sickle.

The CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] intends to submit to the next Duma session a bill "On the State Flag, the Emblem and Anthem of the Russian Federation." The bill provides for the return to communist trappings of state authority. It is proposed that the current tricolor be replaced with a red panel featuring a hammer and sickle, while the two-headed eagle, which has not as yet appeared on passports of new design, be replaced with the 1918 RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic] emblem. (For the benefit of those who forget: It represents a panel of red color with a hammer and sickle against the backdrop of the rays of a rising sun. The panel is framed by golden ears [of cereals] and a red ribbon with the inscription: "Glory to Russia!" instead of the obsolete: "Proletarians of the world, unite!") It was decided to do the same with the anthem; that is, to adopt the former USSR anthem to music by Aleksandrov. New lyrics will need to be written, however. Apparently [Sergey] Mikhalkov will have to take it on again. In proposing to restore the former state trappings, the Communists argue that the current ones are not treated seriously enough by a substantial part of the population and are not used legitimately anyway because they were approved by presidential edicts, not by a federal law, as stipulated by the Constitution. When the new Constitution was adopted, the president submitted a bill to the Duma, proposing a white-red-and-blue flag, a double-headed eagle, and the "Glory to Russia!" anthem to music by Mikhail Glinka. At the time the CPRF faction insisted that its alternative draft, providing for the return of the former trappings, be considered simultaneously. As a result, neither draft received the requisite votes. The CPRF bill was supported by a greater number of deputies. The present Duma is planning to consider only one draft: the Communist one, and without any alternatives or compromises. The draft is to be adopted by a necessary majority (at least 300 votes). Even with support from its traditional allies — the agrarians and the People's Power deputies group — the CPRF is in no position to secure such a number of votes. Yet, if it manages to get the LDPR involved in the effort, the red flag could appear over the Kremlin well before 16 June.

Deputy Oleg Shenkarev, an author of the draft, contends that there is no question of communist revenge about the former trappings. Meaning that red flags were used in Russia ever since the time of Ivan the Terrible. Kiev princes, Dmitriy Donskoy, and Prince Pozharskiy fought under them. The red banner is a traditional Russian flag, not a partisan communist symbol. Shenkarev believes that Yeltsin's recent edict legalizing the use of the red banner as a Victory Flag on public holidays, suggests that the president himself is also gradually coming round to the idea of restoring the former state trappings. According to Shenkarev after the presidential edict it will be easier for the CPRF to get the requisite number of votes in support of its bill. And if the Duma manages to pass it, the president might not use his power of veto. True, before getting to the president, the bill on state trappings could be submitted to a referendum. This idea was recently articulated by Gennadiy Zyuganov. By enlisting "popular support" the Communists will have a stronger case for restoring the former trappings and with it the whole of the communist ideology as the state ideology.

Russia: Legislative, Regulatory Documents 21-27 Apr

96P50076A

[FBIS Report] The following is a listing of Russian legislation recently published in the press of the Russian

Federation compiled by FBIS. Numbers within parentheses indicate approximate wordage. Entries followed by the notation "Text" have been translated into English and are available in FBIS publications.

SECTION I: ECONOMIC LEGISLATION (EXPORT-IMPORT, BANKING, PRIVATIZATION, AUCTIONS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

Chernomyrdin 1 April Decree No. 481 On Regulating Settlements In Respect Of Tax And Other Payments By Enterprises And Taxpaying Organizations Into The Federal Budget, Including The Repayment Of Arrears (Settlements To Be Made In Cash, Not Goods). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Apr 96 p 3) (400) (Text)

RF Government 3 April Directive No. 548 On Transfer Of Elvaks Plant Into Jurisdiction Of RF Ministry Of Atomic Energy. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (100) (Text)

Government 11 April Decree No. 411 On Measures To Protect Russian Producers Of Alcoholic Products From Imports. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (350) (Text)

RF Government 12 April Directive No. 580 On Holding 17-18 May All-Russia Congress Of Railroad Workers. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Government 13 April Directive No. 592 On Implementation Of Various Presidential Edicts Relating To Privatization Of Norilsk Nickel Firm. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (500)

Government 15 April Decree No. 435 Approving Procedure For Conveying To Consumers Information On Origins Of Foreign-Manufactured Alcohol And Tobacco Products. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (300) (Text)

RF Government 15 April Decree No. 473 On Procedure And Conditions For Payment Of Social Services Offered To Aged Persons And Invalids By State And Municipal Social Service Institutions With Appended Statute. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 4) (500/1800)

Yeltsin 16 April Edict No. 565 On Measures To Stabilize Economic Situation And Develop Reform In Agro-Industrial Sector. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 4) (2500) (Text)

Yeltsin-Signed 18 April Federal Law No. 31 On Payment Of Long-Service Pensions To Health Care Workers Engaged In Medical And Other Health Protection Work In Rural Areas. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1) (200)

Federal Law No. 33 Of 18 April On Implementation Of 1994 Budget Of Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (400)

Federal Law No. 34 Of 18 April On 1995 Budget Of Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (400)

Yeltsin 22 April Edict No. 579 On Extension Of Term For Applying For Deferment Of Payment Of Debts Relating To Taxes, Penalties, And Fines. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 p 6) (150)

Yeltsin 22 April Edict No. 597 On Procedure For Allocating Finance For Restoration Of Economy And Social Sphere Of Chechen Republic. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 p 6) (750) (Text)

Yeltsin 22 April Edict No. 598 On Measures To Improve Economic Situation Of Population And Other Consumers Of Energy Resources (Deals With Holding Prices Of Natural Gas At 1 April 1966 Levels During Second And Third Quarters Of Year, Other Measures). (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 p 6) (750) (Text)

Federal Law No. 39 Of 22 April On The Securities Market. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 pp 3-6) (21000)

Yeltsin-Signed 22 April Federal Law No. 40 Increasing Minimum Wage. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 1) (400) (Text)

SECTION II: POLITICAL (INTERNATIONAL AND CIS AFFAIRS, ELECTIONS, CRIME, POLLUTION)

RF Government 21 March Decree No. 321 On Implementation Of General Agreement Between Public Organizations Of Trade Unions, All-Russia Associations Of Employers, And Government Of Russian Federation For 1996-1997 With Commentary By N. Malafeyev, Chief Of Russian Ministry Of Labor Labor Relations And Social Partnership Administration. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 5) (250/1400)

RF Government 21 March Directive No. 428 On Transfer Of Humanitarian Aid To PRC For Relief Following

Natural Disasters. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (350) (Text)

RF Government 25 March Directive No. 471 On Agreeing Measures With Head Of Kamchatka Administration For Celebration Of 300th Anniversary Of Kamchatka's Voluntary Incorporation Into Russia. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Government 25 March Directive No. 476 On Providing Finance For Building Of Interregional Maternity Home In Yuzhnouralsk Plus Commentary By Usoltsev. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (50/450)

Chernomyrdin-Signed 28 March Government Decree No. 362 On Signing Of Agreement With Kyrgyzstan On Labor Activity And Social Protection Of Migrant Workers, Accompanied By Text Of Agreement. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 9) (200/1300)

Yeltsin 11 April Edict No. 528 On Measures To Ensure Constitutional Rights Of Citizens To Participate In Election Of Legislative Organ Of State Power In Tula Oblast Plus Commentary By N. Kireyev. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 4) (250/650)

Yeltsin 13 April Edict No. 549 On Approving Statute On Procedure For Cooperation Between RF President And Chambers Of Federal Assembly In Legislative Process Plus Appended Statute. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Apr 96 p 5) (100/3500)

Government 15 April Decree No. 430 On Conclusion Of Agreement Between RF And UK Governments On Scientific And Technical Cooperation, Approving Draft Agreement (Not Published) And Instructing Sides To Negotiate Finer Points Of Draft. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

Chernomyrdin-Signed 15 April Government Decree No. 438 On Signing Of Agreement With Belarus On Regulating Resettlement Process And Protecting Resettlers' Rights. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (250)

Chernomyrdin-Signed 15 April Government Decree No. 441 On Conclusion Of Agreement With Kazakhstan On Utilization And Leasing Of Search And Rescue Facilities. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (200)

Chernomyrdin-Signed 15 April Government Decree No. 471 On Ratifying Agreement On Development Of Exhibition And Fair Activity In CIS. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (100)

RF Government 15 April Directive No. 601 On Compensation For Lost Housing Payable To Forced Migrants And Refugees From Chechnya Conflict. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (200)

RF Government 15 April Directive No. 611 On Transfer Of Tracts Of Forest Land In Various Regions For Uses Other Than For Forestry. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (250)

Yeltsin 16 April Edict No. 562 On Questions Of Russian Federation President's Main Administration For Cossack Troops. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 4) (700)

Yeltsin 16 April Edict No. 563 On Procedure For Recruiting Members Of Cossack Societies For State And Other Service, Plus Accompanying Statute. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 4) (900/2400)

Yeltsin 16 April Edict No. 564 On Economic And Other Benefits Granted To Cossack Societies And Their Members Who Have Pledged To Perform State And Other Services. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 4) (1100)

Yeltsin 18 April Edict No. 566 On Additional Medical Aid To Population In Regions Affected By Chernobyl Accident. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (250) (Text)

Yeltsin 18 April Edict No. 568 On The Award Of RF State Awards To Active Participants Of Work On Eliminating Consequences Of Chernobyl Accident. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (2800)

Federal Law No. 32 Of 18 April On Alteration To Article No. 29 Of Federal Law On Fire Safety. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (200)

Federal Law No. 35 Of 20 April On Ratification Of RF and Kazakhstan

Agreement On Cooperation In Ensuring Safety Of Baykonur Complex. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Federal Law No. 37 Of 21 April On Denunciation Of Agreement Between USSR Government And Finnish Government On Fishing And Sealing. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 3) (50)

Federal Law No. 38 Of 22 April On Amendments To Federal Law On General

Principles Of Organizing Local Self-Government In Russian Federation. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Apr 96 p 6) (100)

Text Of Agreement, And Appendixes, Between Russia And Georgia On Trade And Economic Cooperation For 1996-1997. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (1500)

Text Of Agreement Between Russia And Georgia On Procedure And Terms For Disseminating Programs Of Russian TV And Radio Broadcasting Organizations On Georgian Territory. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (800)

Text Of Agreement Between Russia And Georgia On Merchant Shipping. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 7) (2250)

SECTION III: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Yeltsin 15 April Edict No. 558 On Measures To Develop Basic Science In RF And Status Of Russian Academy Of Sciences. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Apr 96 p 5) (600) (Text)

Regional Affairs

Russia: Chechnya's Yandarbiyev Still Alive, Meets Reporters

AU0105090496 Paris AFP in English
0858 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A VILLAGE IN SOUTHERN CHECHNYA, Russia, May 1 (AFP) — The new leader of the Chechen separatists, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, spoke to reporters Wednesday at a secret location in southern Chechnya, an AFP correspondent who attended the meeting said.

Yandarbiyev said earlier reports of his death were "wishful thinking in the high echelons of Russian power."

"As you can see, talk of my death was premature," Yandarbiyev said.

Ruslan Martagov, spokesman for the pro-Moscow Chechen government headed by Doku Zavgayev, had previously claimed Yandarbiyev had been killed Sunday in fighting among rival Chechens near the southwestern Chechen town of Urus-Martan.

Yandarbiyev, 44, took over as separatist leader after Dzhokhar Dudayev, who spearheaded the Chechen independence drive, was killed on April 21 in Gekhi-Chu, a village just south of Urus-Martan.

Separatist leaders say Dudayev, 52, died when a Russian air-to-surface missile locked onto the signal from his satellite telephone.

Yandarbiyev Wednesday rejected speculation that the rebel mouvement had been weakened by Dudayev's death.

He said negotiations with Russia to end the 16-month war in the north Caucasus republic could only start "after a full withdrawal of (Russian) troops."

Russia: Chechnya's Yandarbiyev Holds New Conference, Vows To Fight On

AU0105115496 Paris AFP in English
1132 GMT 1 May 96

[By Sebastian Smith]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] A VILLAGE IN SOUTHERN CHECHNYA, Russia, May 1 (AFP) — Chechen rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev said Wednesday that Russian media reports of his death were "premature" and vowed to continue the war for independence.

Yandarbiyev, whom the pro-Moscow Chechen authorities had previously reported killed in a factional shootout, said he would be ready to meet the top Russian leaders for direct talks, but only after a total withdrawal of federal troops.

Yandarbiyev, 44, said the reports of his death Sunday were "wishful thinking in the high echelons of Russian power."

"As you see, talk of my death was premature," he told reporters in a secret, carefully guarded location in the mountains of southern Chechnya.

Ruslan Martagov, spokesman for the pro-Moscow Chechen government headed by Doku Zavgayev, had claimed Yandarbiyev was killed in fighting among rival Chechens near the southwestern Chechen town of Urus-Martan.

Yandarbiyev also denied Russian media reports that rebel unity had crumbled since the death of charismatic independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev on April 21 in what the rebels said was a Russian missile attack.

Yandarbiyev said negotiations with Russia to end the 16-month war would only start "after a full withdrawal of (Russian) troops" from the breakaway Moslem north Caucasus republic.

He said the political status of Chechnya, which unilaterally declared independence from Russia in 1991, could be discussed "at a later date."

However, peace talks would have to be state-to-state, without any intermediaries, he insisted.

"I am ready to talk with the top leaders — the president and prime minister. For their ordinary ministers, we have our ordinary ministers," he said.

"If Russia is really interested, we have no need for any outside mediators." [passage omitted]

Yandarbiyev, a former journalist and poet, dispelled rumours of a split in the separatist leadership by sitting alongside rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov.

Russian media reported earlier that Maskhadov — seen both as the brains behind the rebels' fierce fight for independence and a relatively flexible negotiator — had been replaced as military chief by Shamil Basayev, who led a bloody raid and hostage-taking inside Russia last June.

Maskhadov, like Yandarbiyev clad in camouflage gear and a traditional Chechen grey lambskin hat, said no rebel field commanders would hold separate negotiations with the Russians or Zavgayev's government.

"They said Yandarbiyev was dead, and that I had met in Groznyy with Zavgayev. That's a lie, because I never could — he (Zavgayev) is a traitor," Maskhadov said.

"All this — that Basayev is now chief of staff and that different commanders could hold negotiations — is the work of the Russian special services, to try and divide the Chechen forces," he added.

"The real situation is the opposite ... Every commander, every leader feels more responsibility after Dudayev's death," he said.

Maskhadov blasted surrender accords signed by many Chechen villages.

"Those papers signed by traitors mean nothing," he said, stating that his fighters were in full control of every village in Chechnya.

Maskhadov said his forces were launching a new phase of guerrilla warfare intended to "inflict the maximum casualties possible on the enemy."

"The enemy will not know where we are nor where we attack from," he said.

"Compared with the start of the war, in terms of men and even weapons we are much better off."

No Russian reporters were allowed into the press conference.

Yandarbiyev accused the two Russian national television channels, known for giving the official line on Chechnya, of "completely supporting the Russian leadership and authorities."

Journalists were driven to several safe houses in southern Chechnya before being taken by armed guards to a small, nondescript house for the meeting.

Russia: Dudayev's Supporters Set To Block Coalition Government

LD3004193496 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 1515 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] "There is one lawful government in Chechnya — the government of the Republic of Ichkeria, and we are not going to set up any coalition structures," Vagap Tutakov, representative of the pro-Dudayev government in Russia, told the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

Today Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Abdula Bugayev said the Chechen leadership was ready to set up a coalition government with Dzhokhar Dudayev's supporters.

Tutakov also ruled out any consultations with representatives of the federal authorities and the Doku Zavgayev government until the results of the investigation into Dzhohar Dudayev's death have been revealed.

"As and when results emerge, if any, we will consider the degree of the involvement of the top Russian leadership in the terrorist act against Dudayev, and we will decide afterwards whether the dialogue with the Russian side should be continued," Tutakov emphasized.

He also denied the allegations that Shamil Basayev had been appointed commander in chief of the Chechen armed forces. "This appointment could not be made as it contravenes the constitution of the Republic of Ichkeria," Tutakov stated.

Russia: Basayev Appointment Complicates Chechen Talks

LD3004130596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1246 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (Itar-Tass) — The peaceful talks in Chechnya complicated with the appointment of Shamil Basayev commander of all militants, believes Viktor Ilyukhin, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Security. "It becomes ever more apparent that the possibility of a peaceful outcome is waning," Ilyukhin told Itar-Tass on Tuesday.

Ilyukhin believes that local government bodies should urgently be formed in all regions of Chechnya without withdrawing federal forces from Chechnya. Moscow's aid is, naturally, needed. "I believe the Chechen problem should gradually be scaled down from a problem of all Russia to that of Chechnya proper, and it is necessary to avoid clashes with gunmen as much as possible," Ilyukhin said.

"I have slim belief that Dudayev and Yandarbiyev are dead. I do not rule out that certain guile and tactic of militants may be involved. But in any case this only complicated the situation in Chechnya," Ilyukhin said. "I believe Basayev will now try to subjugate all field commanders and establish tight control over all gunmen, which can only lead to the aggravation of terrorism, and not only in the Chechen territory," Ilyukhin said.

Russia: Resumption of Dialogue With Chechnya's Maskhadov Urged

MM3004075796 Moscow DOM I OTECHESTVO in Russian 30 Apr-6 May 96 p 1

[Report by Tamara Zamyatina: "Stakes Are Higher Than Life Itself"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Without doubt the deaths of Dudayev and his successor Yandarbiyev will cause ferment and a division of power and spheres of influence among their supporters. Therefore delaying talks with the separatist leader's successors can only exacerbate the situation and give the rebels a chance to seize the initiative, which should now rest with the State Commission for Settling the Chechen Crisis. One terrorist act, one raid by "avengers" could once again set the peace plan's implementation back for an indefinite period.

Russian politicians, including the head of state, have adopted the only correct tone in assessing the consequences of Dudayev's death, demonstrating not triumph over the vanquished but the desire to establish peace "with or without Dudayev," and thereby not hurting the feelings of the supporters of the unrecognized president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

The killing of Yandarbiyev in as yet unexplained circumstances exacerbates the situation. Nevertheless Moscow must take measures aimed at an immediate resumption of the talks process. With whom? Most people who are privy to mutual relations between Moscow and so-called Ichkeria are putting their money on Aslan Maskhadov, the informal leader of Dudayev's supporters.

Maskhadov has always been critical both of the radicals among pro-Russian Chechen politicians and the fanatics in Dudayev's camp. The message of his numerous rally speeches following the signing of the Agreement on a Block of Military Questions 31 July 1995 was the call "to forget blood revenge and unite as a single people." Maskhadov reminded Chechens that they survived as a people during deportation by managing to organize life in the empty Kazakhstani steppes. "All the more reason that we will manage to restore what has been destroyed in our native land and begin to live as well as we have become accustomed to living," he stated at a summer rally in Shali. Moreover, I have kept a record of an interview with Maskhadov published in many newspapers: "Even if Dudayev changes completely, even if Allah himself changes completely, I will implement the peace agreement in the name of my people."

Such words are not bandied about. They caused a rift between Maskhadov and Dudayev who, in a telephone conversation intercepted by special services, called him a "mule head" for making this comment.

In the light of Maskhadov's high standing among the population and Chechen field commanders, it would make sense if the federal department leaders and Russian politicians who had confidential relations with the chief of staff of Dudayev's formations before the attempted assassination of General Anatoliy Romanov — Internal Affairs Minister Anatoliy Kulikov; Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhaylov; and Arkadiy Volskiy, president of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs — were to resume the broken-off dialogue with the commonsense and influential Maskhadov, who now, following the deaths of Dudayev and Yandarbiyev, is not making the problem of Chechnya's future status the top priority but is calling above all for an end to the war and a withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

Objections like "but he is the organizer of the gunmen's military operations" could once again drive the situation into a deadlock, because the way public opinion sees it there are not just innocent people or just guilty people in the Chechen war. The sooner the members of the State Committee for Settling the Chechen Crisis adopt the proper decision, the more gratitude they will deserve from their fellow citizens.

Russia: Zavgayev: Yeltsin Likely To Visit Chechnya 'in May'

LD3004151296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1430 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected to visit Chechnya and the Chechen capital of Groznyy in May, Moscow-backed Head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev told Interfax today.

Zavgayev said that he had met with Yeltsin on Tuesday [30 April] and Yeltsin had confirmed "his intention of coming to Groznyy."

"The trip is likely to take place in May," Zavgayev said. During the Chechen visit, Yeltsin plans to see for himself the implementation of his peace plan and the program to rebuild Chechnya's economic and social sphere, he said.

Economic Issues

Russia: Minister Yasin on First Quarter Economic Performance

MM2904145996 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Apr 96 p 10

[Transcription by Igor Duel of remarks by Russian Economy Minister Yevgeniy Yasin: "Yevgeniy Yasin: 'President Yeltsin's Election Victory Will Sharply Increase Foreign Investment'" — from the "Economic Union" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] When he recently addressed journalists Russian Federation Economy Minister Yevgeniy Yasin summarized the preliminary results of Russia's economic development in the first quarter of the year.

Weakening of Inflationary Pressure

The main result is that macroeconomic stabilization is continuing, although the overall situation remains complex and contradictory.

Nevertheless the government is sticking to its budgetary and financial policy. In March, as in February, inflation came to rest at 2.8 percent.

Honor Is an Economic Concept

Currently the main brake on the development of the Russian economy is the large budget deficit. It arises primarily because of the low collection level of taxes and is forcing the government to carry out emissions of high-income securities — short-term state bonds, federal loan bonds, and state savings bonds — on a considerable scale.

Consequently the banks, while having the opportunity to profitably invest their own funds in securities, are continuing to maintain high credit rates, which is making them inaccessible to many enterprises. Because the state lacks the reserves to cover the budget deficit, this circle cannot be broken at the moment.

The minister also noted that partners' honesty in meeting the commitments they have undertaken — this is an absolutely essential institution of a market economy — is not operating properly in our country. Our business people have not yet grasped that debts must be paid even when this is difficult.

Foreign Trade Balance Has Improved

The government has managed to overcome the wholesale slump in industrial production. Its volume in the first quarter of this year decreased four percent compared with the same period last year. This reduction occurred mainly in January, while in February and especially March a trend toward stabilization emerged. The five percent fall in March was less than in February. In short, the overall situation has developed more successfully than was forecast by the Economy Ministry.

Neither did the expected deterioration in the foreign economic balance occur. Exports for January-February increased five percent compared with the same period last year while imports increased 10 percent.

Main Concern

The Russian economy's future depends on increasing investment activity. The country has now reached a point whereby the lack of financial investment in industry could lead to irreversible consequences.

A vast gulf has developed between the indicator of the population's monetary savings (in itself it is encouraging: Twenty-five percent of Russians' income goes on savings) and citizens' extremely low participation in investment in production, the service sector, and trade. Most of the population are converting their savings into dollars, which finances the U.S. Government and not Russia.

Substantial changes are needed in relation to investment by the state. First it must be ensured that the 17 trillion rubles [R] set aside in the budget for these purposes is actually spent on them. Plus another R3 trillion for highly effective, quick-return projects.

Sphere of the Sweetest Hopes

When Yasin became economy minister in fall 1994 he promised to achieve an annual doubling of foreign investment volumes. In 1995 they increased by a factor of 2.8.

What are the current prospects? The economy minister stated on this subject: "If President Yeltsin wins the election I expect a sudden sharp surge of foreign investment in the Russian economy in the second half of the year. Above all this is linked to the implementation of the "Sakhalin-1" and "Sakhalin-2" oil projects and a whole range of others. According to my estimates, foreign businessmen are prepared to invest $90 billion in implementing them. Of course, the sum has not been calculated over one year. But a major breakthrough will most likely begin in this sector.

Russia: Livshits' News Conference Updates Economic Situation

LD3004190296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1723 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, April 30 (FIA-INTERFAX) — The Russian authorities do not intend to review the results of the shares-for-loans auctions held in late 1995, Russian presidential economic adviser Aleksandr Livshits told a news conference at the Interfax central office Tuesday.

"There can be no review of the results of the shares-for-loans auctions by the president or anybody else, except for the courts," he said.

"Russia must forget about such ways of resolving problems forever if it wants to be called a civilized country," said Livshits.

He did not rule out that such auctions may continue in 1996, albeit with changes in their procedure, which will reflect the need to correct the mistakes made in 1995.

The auctions of 12 major enterprises, including the oil companies Lukoil, Yukos, Sidanko, Sibneft, and the Russian nickel monopoly, Norilsk Nickel, brought 4.7 trillion rubles to the federal budget, which accounted for more than half of 1995 privatization revenues, the Russian State Property Committee reports.

Revenues from privatization in 1996 will largely depend on the results of the June 16 presidential elections, Livshits said. He said he shares the view of Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the State Property Committee Aleksandr Kazakov that it will be difficult for Russian privatization agencies to meet the budgetary expectations of privatization revenues.

Regarding Russia's attempts to join the Paris Club, Livshits says Russia is currently "closer than ever" to joining the Club, which unites the world's major creditor countries.

As for the prospects of Russian President Boris Yeltsin bringing the issue up at the Group of Seven summit in the French city of Lyon in June, Livshits recalled that Yeltsin announced Moscow's decision to join the Paris Club during his visit to the United States in late 1994. Russia's stand has not changed since then, though Moscow's relations with international financial institutions have experienced certain alterations, he said.

Livshits said political uncertainty on the eve of the presidential elections in Russia is upsetting the financial markets.

He believes that when the government borrows money in the financial market, it has to pay dearly for political uncertainty.

Rates on short-term treasury bills to be paid in early June before the presidential election average 62-63 percent, whereas the average profitability of securities the government would have to pay at the end of summer or in early fall is much higher (about 120 percent). Livshits warned that when the day came to pay the government's debt, the money would have to be deducted from the budget.

Livshits believes that if President Boris Yeltsin's political opponents promise that the treasury bills and federal bonds will be paid, that will be enough to calmly finance payments to ordinary people.

The mechanism for Russia's access to the world stock markets with state securities, the issue of Eurobonds, has been fully coordinated, Livshits said.

Foreign investors know and understand this mechanism, but "now they want to know one thing, which is who will be president of Russia?" Livshits said.

"The distribution of Russian government liabilities abroad as well as the access of non-residents to the T-bill market will be a true revolution in the Russian economy, because it will help the return to the normal funding of the budget deficit and will finally attract an influx of foreign investments," Livshits said.

The state must tighten control over the activities of commercial banks, he said. At the same time, there is no need to create another federal body for this kind of work, he said.

"A larger number of supervisors is unlikely to reduce the number of unscrupulous banks," he said. "It is the banking supervision department of the Central Bank of Russia that should work well.

"The Central Bank is doing better in macroeconomic policy than in specifically banking affairs," he noted.

Commenting on the collection of taxes in Russia, Livshits underlined that he did feel that "some disastrous undercollection of taxes is happening.

"However, I am suspicious about the uncontrolled and spontaneous tax exemptions and, what is most important, Finance Ministry guarantees," he said. "If we do not stop this process, the budget may well find itself without revenues."

Livshits has failed to confirm the rumor that President Boris Yeltsin has frozen the prices of gas and electricity and fares on transport.

"I know there is a draft of such a decree, but I have no information whether it has been signed," Livshits said at a news conference at the central office Interfax on Tuesday. Livshits said that a freeze on tariffs was not the best way of curbing natural monopolies and remarked that tariff policies were the government's prerogative.

Livshits described as reasonable and balanced the appeal "An End to the Deadlock," a document signed by leading Russian businessmen and calling for moderation in the run-up to the presidential elections. "Any step towards eliminating confrontation between the two chief rivals in the presidential election would only do good," he said.

At the same time Livshits said that there was still no answer to the question as to which extremes should be done away with to make the signatories to the message happy and what the compromise technique was all about. Livshits said what made the message most important was the idea that a departure from the policy of reform and the current economic strategy would be disastrous.

Livshits said that in response to the memorandum from bankers and entrepreneurs he would with great pleasure subscribe to a message saying: "You have nothing to be afraid of. Nobody asks you to love Yeltsin. Just keep working and don't ruin the economy with panic and intention to flee."

Livshits said Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree on additional measures to bring into effect the federal law "On Veterans.".

"This law has no sources of financing. The presidential decree merely starts the first phase of implementing it. There are no financial means to effect all provisions of the law at once," Livshits said.

President Yeltsin had instructed the government to submit a draft law to the State Duma to lessen the profit tax levied on enterprises by the amount they spend to support veterans. Livshits explained that the term "support" implied loans for purchasing summer country cottages, homes, etc.

Yeltsin instructed the Communications, Construction and Railways ministries to take measures within the framework of their own budgets to put into effect the law "On Veterans." The Ministry of Railways on Tuesday established discounts for veterans. The Ministry of Communications is about to make a decision to make telephone lines available to veterans free of charge and slash bills for using telephones and television aerials. The Ministry of Construction will cut rent and amenity bills by half.

"Instructions to local authorities have been issued already," Livshits said.

Russia: Pension Arrears Situation 'Normalized' in 74 Regions

MM0105092596 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 1

[ITAR-TASS report: "Pensions Right in Time for the Holiday"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A.Ya. Livshits, the Russian Federation president's adviser on economic questions, has announced new details of the implementation of the president's plan for clearing pension arrears.

Vladimir Oblast, which has been sent 125 million rubles, has been added to the 45 regions that have received 100-percent financial support. In view of the fact that 28 Russian Federation components have funded pensions entirely from their own income, the situation regarding the payment of arrears has been normalized in 74 regions.

Russia: Cash Shortage Hits Military Housing Construction Program

MM0105084196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 30 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Colonel Ivan Ivanyuk and Captain Second Rank Yuriy Gladkevich: "Homelessness Problem Remains. But, Were It Not for State Programs, There Would Be Even Less Housing for Servicemen"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The interdepartmental commission monitoring the implementation of housing construction programs for servicemen, citizens discharged from military service, and their families has summed up the results of the implementation of the state program for 1993-1995. At a news conference commission head Colonel General Anatoliy Solomatin, Russian Federation deputy defense minister and chief of construction and troop billeting, and Russian Deputy Construction Minister Aleksandr Babenko announced some extremely eloquent figures. In 1993 construction had funding to meet 75.2 percent of its actual requirements, whereas in 1994 and 1995 the figures were 19.5 and 14.6 percent respectively. There were plans to build 220,000 apartments over three years using state budget funds, but less than half that number were actually built. Yet virtually all the funds allocated by the Defense Ministry for construction — over 80 percent — were used for this purpose.

In effect the targets for the provision of housing for people discharged from military service were also thwarted. Things looked quite optimistic in Moscow and Moscow Oblast (around 30 percent of all housing was built and acquired), Krasnodar Kray, Rostov and Nizhniy Novgorod Oblasts, and the Urals. But not a single apartment was allocated for those discharged in 1995 in Karelia, the Republic of Mari El, Kalmykia, Adygea, Tuva, and a number of oblasts.

As a result to date there are over 117,000 families of military career officers without housing, over 50,000 families need an improvement in their housing conditions, and the number of citizens discharged into the reserve awaiting apartments has reached 150,000. The situation would be even worse were it not for the "7.8 Billion German Mark" program funded by Germany for the servicemen withdrawn from its territory (36,000 apartments have been built in Russia — as many as it was planned to build throughout the former USSR) and the U.S. grant of $160 million (5,000 apartments).

The embarrassment of the 1993-1995 program forced the government to extend it to 1996-1997. But the results of the first few months of the year are alarming: The Defense Ministry's corresponding requirements were only 10-percent funded during the first quarter of the year and all the money was spent on paying wage arrears. Not a cent was received for capital construction. It nonetheless proved possible to build 3,700 plus 919 apartments using all sources of funding — for people discharged into the reserve. Plenty has also been done to create favorable conditions for housing construction for the military in the future. Thus, by agreement with partners from Germany, a modern enterprise is under construction in Sertolovo (Leningrad Oblast) and a standardized system of apartment block production is being developed. And that means 150,000 square meters of housing per year. According to Col. Gen. Anatoliy Solomatin, "this represents 21st-century housing construction technology."

Nonetheless the problem of funding remains the main one. Even the existence of a state program does not inspire optimism among the homeless military. The following figures indicate how well-founded the hopes pinned on the state budget are. Whereas during the first quarter of the year three percent more housing was built for Russian citizens as a whole than in the same period last year, 23 percent less was built for the military. And housing commissioned for the Defense Ministry compared with the first quarter of 1995 fell by 22 percent.

"The number of servicemen and people discharged from military service who are homeless or need an improvement in their housing conditions is so large, and the problem is so acute that it cannot be resolved without major state involvement," Col. Gen. Anatoliy Solomatin believes. "We cannot renounce state programs. Were it not for them, the military would receive even less housing."

National Affairs

Ukraine: Marchuk, Lukashenka, Cited on Chernobyl

MM2904160296 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 26 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by NEKOS news agency's Vladimir Gubarev: "Chernobyl: The Truth and the Lies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The pain of Chernobyl has not been relieved for 10 years now. But sometimes it suddenly becomes so searing as to make your heart burst. This happens in those moments when realize that no lessons have been learned from the tragedy of Chernobyl and people are continuing to live and work as if it had not taken place.

I considered this when I was working on the book "The Nuclear Age. Chernobyl." I could not help but compare the past with the present in Vienna's Kongresshalle, the venue of a conference "summing up the past decade".... But is it really possible to "sum it up"? And finally — the "lessons of Chernobyl." What do people have in mind when they talk about them?

Why was it that the Chernobyl disaster was for some a tragedy while it gave others an opportunity to climb the ladder of power?

Orchards Behind Barbed Wire

When faced with reality, conjecture is unnecessary. At the Vienna conference on Chernobyl, not only scientists but politicians summed up the effects of the incident in Chernobyl. Belarusian President A. Lukashenka, Ukrainian Prime Minister Ye. Marchuk, and Russian Ministry for Affairs of Civil Defense, Emergency Situations, and Elimination of Natural Disasters Chief S. Shoygu addressed us. They made official reports to the public around the world on behalf of the three republics.

[Lukashenka] "The consequences of the Chernobyl disaster were visited upon the republic at a time when a crisis had shaken society, which compounded the nuclear disaster's effects....

"I often visit the deserted villages and orchards fenced off behind barbed wire. This year these orchards will come into bloom once more, but there will be nobody to pick the fruit in the fall....

"The losses that the republic incurred as a result of the disaster are equivalent to 32 annual budgets. Every year a quarter of budget funds (actually more than 25 percent) is spent on eradicating the effects of the accident....

"I propose setting up a 'Protection Fund for the Planet.' All dangerous production facilities, including those of the nuclear industry, are obligated to donate money to the fund to resolve the social problems of the population that has been affected. It is essential that we think right now about the consequences of the technologically based disasters that are occurring on the planet. We, Belarusians, have unfortunately seen for ourselves their global nature...."

[Marchuk] "For Ukraine's population the world 'before' and 'after' Chernobyl bear no resemblance to one another. The accident at the Chernobyl AES [nuclear electric power station] condemned millions of people to suffer, caused alarm among them about their children's future, and changed the environment in which they lived as well even as their psychology...

"However complex the accident's true causes may be, there is no doubt that they lie primarily in deficiencies in the reactor's construction which permitted a source of great danger to function without a proper protection mechanisms. It was these circumstances alongside defective regulating documents that were the accident's chief causes....

"The 'sarcophagus' is a highly complex technological installation. At the same time the 'sarcophagus' is a terrible legacy. There are around 200 tonnes of nuclear fuel inside it. The facility's operation and the resolution of the problem of turning it into an ecologically safe system is a heavy burden on the national budget which is saddled with eliminating the disaster's social and radiological consequences....

"Currently resident in Ukraine are some 360,000 persons involved in the cleanup who require treatment or constant medical supervision, an opportunity to convalesce, and compensation for the damage to their health irrespective of its nature. Some 35,000 of them have become invalids. Apart from this, there are 3.1 million people who are presently living or lived during the year of the disaster in the contaminated area. They include around 1 million children.

"I also want to talk about the Chernobyl AES's closure. We confirm our intentions enshrined in the Memorandum of Mutual Understanding between the Ukrainian Government, the G-7 countries' governments, and the European Commission to close the Chernobyl AES by the year 2000. But without realistic financial assistance actually being provided by the world community, Ukraine is not in a position to take this step owing to the difficult financial situation it is in. Ukraine, which at one time made the choice of becoming a nonnuclear state, has not as yet received sufficient financial assistance to resolve this question in spite of assurances by several countries that they would provide financial support...."

It is necessary to consider the fate of the Chernobyl AES separately, therefore let us break off from our quotation of Marchuk's speech at the Vienna conference.

Enough of Illusions

In my opinion all the negotiations and memorandums about the Chernobyl AES are yet another attempt to pull the wool over the world community's eyes. They say that the AES in Chernobyl is closing down and that there will be no problem about this!

But the fact of the matter is that the closure, or to be more precise the shutting down and mothballing of the Chernobyl AES's three power units, will only make the situation worse in the zone — it will not increase nuclear safety but lower it greatly! It is clear that there will be insufficient funding to support the collective that stayed behind at the former AES and keeps an eye on the "sarcophagus," that the highly qualified specialists will leave for other functioning AES's, and that assistance from the West will not arrive in sufficient quantities....

Unfortunately, counting on our sugar daddy across the ocean is very unrealistic. Everyone remembers the assurances that the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine and the dismantling of strategic nuclear weapons would be accompanied by copious amounts of financial aid to resolve technical problems and to fund social programs. But the promises remained promises. And real assistance only came from Russia, in particular with regard to the supply of nuclear fuel for the republic's AES's. Thus the rebuke made by the Ukrainian prime minister of the G-7 nations is relevant and accurate, but the past is teaching us nothing, which is why Marchuk said in Vienna: "We are counting on the world community taking a series of decisive measures aimed at eliminating the effects of the most important technological disaster in the history of mankind thanks to the efforts of various countries' governments and international organizations."

I think that another "illusion about Chernobyl" is being created for the umpteenth time. The G-7 leaders did indeed meet in Moscow. Russian President B. Yeltsin received them. L. Kuchma joined the debate. But they did not discuss the elimination of the disaster's effects; there was only talk of closing the Chernobyl AES. The president promised to "study the question of the 'sarcophagus' and if necessary appropriate $3 billion to build a new housing for it...."

Based on the experience of the last 10 years, I know for sure that the money will not arrive and it will cost Ukraine approximately $2 billion a year to close the nuclear power station. Consequently, there will be even less resources for social needs and to deal effectively with the children's' health....

The whole story of the Chernobyl disaster is based on a total lie. This lie led to the accident, "covered up" its extent, and is now behind the so-called problem of "the Chernobyl AES's closure." But we should be discussing the elimination and lessening of the nuclear disaster's effects, which is a social rather than a technical problem.

After a strictly political report by S. Shoygu at the conference in Vienna, his deputy, V. Vladimirov spoke. He talked about the socioeconomic consequences of the accident in Chernobyl. He was listened to with great interest; after all, Vladimirov was one of the first to be affected by the nuclear explosion — during those dreadful days of spring 1986 he was working in Chernobyl.

We Are Seeing the Consequences but Not Their Cause

[Vladimirov] "Unfortunately, the political and economic processes that occurred first in the USSR then subsequently in Russia have not facilitated the effective elimination of the accident's consequences over the past 10 years. Moreover, there have been times when an increase in the level of their negative effect has been noticed...."

It seems to me that it is incredible to hear such an admission from such a high-ranking official as V. Vladimirov. It is usually the opposite that is claimed.... Even at the meeting with the G-7 nations, it was claimed that "Russia's AES's have become safer during the past four years." But this is unfortunately the next in a series of half-truths. True, the nuclear industry (incidentally, not only in Russia but also in Ukraine) adopted a series of technical decisions and excluded the possibility of a repetition of such a disaster. However, the politicians, the public, and, unfortunately, the state authorities have done everything to sharply reduce the safety of our AES's! This is no lapsus but a reflection of reality. Surely the excesses of the "greens," who even blockaded certain AES's, did not help the specialists in their work? Or the regular wage delays that forced nuclear power workers from a number of power stations to hold rallies outside the White House gates in Moscow — surely they too did not increase safety at the AES's?

We should pay homage to the courage and sense of responsibility of the nuclear power industry workers, who in unbelievably difficult circumstances — the opposition of "greens," officials, and a whole variety of commercial organizations — are nevertheless maintaining a level of safety at our AES's that is so high as to surpass that in the United States, Canada, and Germany, to which we are at present appealing for help.

V. Vladimirov continues: "As a result of the accident at the Chernobyl AES, the area of Russia now contaminated with cesium-137 amounts to almost 67,000 square kilometers. Around 300 square kilometers have been withdrawn from economic use and the population has been moved out.

"The economic losses sustained by the country in the years 1986- 1989 in regard of all sources of finance amounted to 23.8 billion rubles [R] (which is the equivalent of $30 billion). Correspondingly, Russia's expenditure in the years 1992-1995 exceeded R14 trillion (around $2 billion)....

"As sociological research in recent years demonstrates, in spite of the difficult ecological situation in these oblasts, the population there is concerned first and foremost not so much about the accident's ecological and medical consequences as about its grave material situation, inflation, and the crisis in the economy. There are objective grounds for this. Figures for the average wage and total income here are considerably lower than the Russian average, and the level of wages is lower than the cost of a selection of basic foodstuffs...."

Ukraine: Horbulin Reportedly Optimistic Concerning Yeltsin Visit

AU3004120496 Kiev DEMOKRATYCHNA UKRAYINA in Ukrainian 27 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Whims of the Political Climate"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As Volodymyr Horbulin, secretary of the National Security Council subordinated to the Ukrainian president, said at a recent Presidential Administration briefing, bilateral meetings also took place at the recent summit [in Moscow]. Some of them were particularly symptomatic from the point of view of Ukraine's strategic international policy.

Whereas a significant rapprochement has taken shape between Ukraine and France, a reverse process is possible in the case of Canada, a country with the largest Ukrainian diaspora. At any rate, in his conversation with [Ukrainian President] Leonid Kuchma, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien expressed dissatisfaction with the course of fulfillment of the Ukrainian-Canadian accord. Mainly due to the Ukrainian side's foot-dragging.

With regard to Russia, over the next few weeks we should hardly expect either a warm or a cool spell. Once again, the two presidents expressed the desire that the interests of the two states on all problems be taken into account. Yet again Volodymyr Horbulin turned out to be an optimist. He expressed the opinion that Boris Yeltsin's visit may, in the end, take place prior to the presidential elections in Russia. Let us add to this, though, that it is provided that Mr. President is firmly convinced that it will earn him points in the election marathon.

Ukraine: National Minorities Deem Constitution Draft 'Flawed'

WS0105100396 Kiev KIYEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 29 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Hleb Horodnychenko: "Basic Law in the Eyes of National Minorities: Our Destiny Is Being Resolved Without Us"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last Friday 26 April], the constitution draft was discussed by chairmen of over 30 national minority communities during an afternoon session in Kiev. The Basic Law did not inspire confidence in the future among the participants.

Virtually all articles and provisions touching upon the destiny of small nationalities and nations (according to certain data, their number is 136) were assessed by the participants as "flawed" and "not guaranteeing full rights and freedoms."

As it became clear during the discussion, representatives of small nations had not been asked by the authorities to take part in the elaboration of the constitution; their opinion (the opinion of over 6 percent of the country's population) had not been taken into account. As one participant in the meeting noted, "our destiny is being resolved without us, like some time ago they 'resolved' the destiny of the Indians in America...." "We all voted for a new Ukraine," I. Levitas, head of the Council of Ukrainian National Minorities, stated, "but now something different is being done, without our participation."

Where is the money that was envisioned by the law for subsidizing the cultures of national minorities? Where are the funds promised for restoring national minority schools? Why do the leaders of national minority movements and communities not participate in elaborating a program for preserving national and cultural uniqueness [gambitnost]? Inspections of the Ukrainian-German and Ukrainian-Jewish funds, which was carried out by state bodies, took place without the participation of Germans and Jews, for whom these state funds were allegedly established. The results of these inspections have remained a complete mystery. The meeting was electrified by the question: Who of the participants had seen the framework convention on the protection of national minorities, which was ratified by Ukraine in Strasbourg as far back as... 15 September

1995? It turned out that nobody had. Only an official from the Ministry of Nationalities, who attended the meeting, confirmed that "such a convention exists" and promised to disseminate it among those wanting it. "Please drop in to the ministry." Among other issues, the convention determines a list of international obligations of a state with regard to its "non-indigenous" citizens, that is, vulnerable ones.

Even if late, the chairmen decided to submit their proposals to the Constitutional Commission.... Maybe, they will be of some use. The representatives of small nations, while breaking up in the dusk, envied the Germans: "You have at least one deputy — Mozer. You have someone to complain to." A clerk persuaded an elder Gypsy: "There is a plenty of freedom in this constitution!" And, to mark the extent of this freedom, he moved his hand across his throat. "Only a Gypsy knows what freedom is," the elder Gypsy responded through clenched teeth.

Ukraine: Meetings, Demonstrations Set for May Day

LD3004210596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2100 GMT 30 Apr 96

[By Mikhail Melnik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, May 1 (Itar-Tass) - Seven political parties in Ukraine obtained permission to hold meeting and demonstration on May 1, International Day of Workers' Solidarity, sources in the Kiev Mayor's Office told Tass.

Party activists will take to the streets carrying different slogans. The communists and the Socialists will appeal for workers' solidarity. According to their estimates, 40,000 people will participate in the events under the red banners.

The Republicans, the Nationalists and other national-democratic parties and movements intend to turn May Day into a spring festival. However, their are expected to use their tribunes to bring shame on the leftists.

The All-Ukraine Workers' Union has decided to use the day off to express no-confidence in the government for its decision "to base the new constitution on the project which was prepared by the (parliamentary) constitutional committee."

According to them, the project infringes on the rights of people and strips them of social protection. The union intends to stage impressive mass demonstration which "would make authorities give up their anti-popular economic policy," its leader, Oleksandr Bondarchuk told Tass.

Ukraine: Around 5,000 Left-Wing Supporters in Kiev May Day Rally

LD0105110096 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0950 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev, 1 May — Around 5,000 left-wing supporters have joined in a May Day procession and rally on European Square in central Kiev. The rally was attended by representatives of the Communist, Socialist, Peasant, and Progressive Socialist parties, the All-Ukrainian Union of Workers, the Coordinating Council of Left Forces in Kiev Region, and the Union of Communists.

Speaking at the rally, Oleksandr Bondarchuk , chairman of the All-Ukrainian Union of Workers, said that the left-wing opposition has not been successful in organizing effective counteraction to the "antipopular regime of President Leonid Kuchma."

Bondarchuk said Kuchma has "betrayed his election promises, and so betrayed his people." He urged support for those parliament deputies who stood in favor of the left-wing anticrisis program.

The program's demands, such as nationalization of large enterprises and commercial banks, establishment of labor collective councils at enterprises, and compensation to individuals for any loss of property and funds as a result of reforms, were welcomed with applause.

Bondarchuk said that if these demands were not met, left-wing forces should call for the president's resignation, dissolution of the Supreme Council, and the election of a government of popular trust.

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Cabinet of Minister Considers Payments Crisis

LD3004201896 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1800 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, the Cabinet of Ministers considered measures aimed at overcoming the payments crisis and ensuring the compliance with the budget.

The meeting considered the results of the implementation of the legislative and other normative acts adopted in compliance with the president's instructions of 22 May 1995 and additional measures aimed at overcoming the payments crisis. The meeting was conducted by Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk and attended by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council Oleksandr Tkachenko, heads of some standing commissions of the parliament, and directors of a number of enterprises. At the meeting it was noted that the possibility of alleviating the payments' crisis at the cost of state reserves has been effectively exhausted. At the same time there is evidence of a considerable lag in the structural reform of enterprises and the transfer to the production of goods which would be in demand. It was noted that an interdepartmental committee for matters of restructuralization and bankruptcy could help the situation. The government believes that it is extremely necessary today.

At its meeting the Cabinet of Ministers also considered the reasons for the failure to implement the revenue provisions of the budget and the measures aimed at perfecting the legislation and increasing the responsibility of the leaders of all levels for failure to comply with the budget. It was noted that on 1 March 1996 the total sum of outstanding payments of enterprises and organizations had reached 1.455 quadrillion karbovantsi. A decision was taken as to overcoming the payments crisis and increasing the budget revenue.

Ukraine: Marchuk Says Economy Ministry To Blame for Payments Crisis

LD3004195596 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1430 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev [no date as received] — At a Cabinet of Ministers sitting today, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk focused on the slow rate at which the market economy infrastructures was being created. He noted that at a time of positive movement in the economy at a macrolevel, in particular when the decline in production was slowing down, there had been a shortfall in income to the budget in the first quarter of 200,000 billion karbovantsi. "There should be personal accountability for this," the prime minister stressed.

Marchuk named as one of the main reasons for the payments crisis in Ukraine "the serious shortcomings in the Economy Ministry's organizational work."

He supported Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh's proposal on the necessity of setting up a national council for monetary and credit policy.

Ukraine: 'Small-Scale Privatization' in Crimea To Be Accelerated

WS0105084096 Lvov INFOBANK in English 0750 GMT 1 May 96

[From "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Due to difficulties in collecting revenues for Crimea's budget, the Crimean Property Fund is planning to increase the amount of revenues from small-scale privatization in 1996 to 2.4 trillion karbovantsi [K] (compared with K805 billion planned earlier). This information was made public at a session of the Crimean legislature by the head of Crimea's Property Fund, Oleksiy Holovizin.

Mr. Holovizin said that one condition for reaching such a goal was the hiring of new personnel in regional offices of the fund and increasing their number to 450. By doing this, he said, expenditures for maintaining personnel will grow by K55 billion to K157 billion. According to the Ukrainian State Property Fund's plans, the Crimean Property Fund was to receive K1.5 trillion from the privatization of Crimean businesses and properties in 1996, K805 billion of which was to come from small-scale privatization.

In the first quarter of 1996, 221 businesses and properties were privatized in Crimea and 280 are to be prepared for privatization in the second quarter.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Obligates Authorities To Ensure Law on Labor Day

WS3004131096 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1200 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has issued a directive to ensure legal order in the Republic during Labor Day festivities. The document obligates oblast executive councils, the Minsk City Executive Committee, and local administrations to ensure that festivities devoted to Labor Day comply with the established procedures for organizing and conducting gatherings, rallies, street processions, and demonstrations. According to the directive, organizers of gatherings, rallies, street processions, and demonstrations bear personal responsibility for violations of law when these events are taking place.

Belarus: President's May Day Greetings Condemn Opposition's Actions

LD3004172096 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1600 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On the occasion of the May Day holiday, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has addressed a message of greetings to the citizens of Belarus. It says:

Today we are marking a great, truly remarkable date — International May Day. This genuine spring labor festival has become a public holiday in our country. Despite all the stormy changes of recent times, it still symbolizes friendship and brotherhood of working people, regardless of where they live and work, in town or village.

The process of forming new working relations is not going smoothly. Many factors are influencing their establishment and strengthening. It is specially dangerous when malicious politicians who are following their own selfish, narrow interests get involved in it. Where this leads was shown by the clearly expressed provocative action organized by the Belarusian People's Front and its followers on the sad anniversary of the accident at Chernobyl nuclear power station, the message says. [passage omitted]

The state will provide the necessary help to its working citizens to best of its ability. For all of us today the main task is to ensure a breakthrough in developing the economy. It is good to see that certain moves have already been made here. We must not allow confrontation kindled by irresponsible adventurists to ruin the first shoots of general stabilization and undermine the basis of our free, democratic development.

This should be understood by everyone and specially young people, the most dynamic and socially active section of society, the president continues. I express the firm conviction that this republic of workers and partisans [as heard] will be able to solve our complex economic, spiritual, and moral problems. This will be promoted to a considerable extent by the growing cooperation with Russia and other friendly countries.

Happy May Day, dear compatriots! May peace, work, and accord reign in our common Belarusian home!

Belarus: Opposition Parties' Statement Denounces Dictatorial Regime

LD3004172196 Minsk BELAPAN in Belarusian 1646 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of democratic Belarusian organizations have issued a statement in connection with the 26 April events in Minsk. The statement says that a dictatorial, totalitarian regime has been established in Belarus, and also declares: "The cynicism of the authorities and the violation of human rights forces us to appeal to the citizens of Belarus and all democratic organizations to unite in fighting for their rights, for their state, against the open threats to democracy in the center of Europe."

The document also expresses hope for understanding and support on the part of those states where legality and democracy are already firmly established. The statement is signed by the leaders of the Belarusian Social Democratic Gramada, the Belarusian People's Front, the Belarusian Peasant Party, the Belarusian National Party, the Belarusian Association of Servicemen, the All-Belarusian Voters' Club, the Common Sense Party, and several other organizations.

Belarus: Union Federation, Party Members To Hold May Day Rally

WS0105084196 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0300 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Minsk City Executive Committee has complied with a request by the Federation of Belarusian Trade Unions to hold a May Day demonstration and rally in Independence Square. It is expected that some 40-45,000 individuals will participate in today's actions. In the morning, workers will form festive columns in every district of the capital. Then they will head for Independence Square. At about 1100 [0800 GMT], a rally will begin, during which representatives of the Federation of Belarusian Trade Unions, branch unions, as well as various parties and movements are expected to make speeches.

Belarus: Communist Leader Vows 'Mass Meeting' in Independence Square

WS0105084296 Minsk BELAPAN in English
0655 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minsk, 30 April — The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Party of Communists, Syarhey Kalyakin, told a BELAPAN correspondent that on May 1 a mass-meeting on the occasion of the international holiday of working people the would take place on Lenin Square (Mr Kalyakin used the former name of Independence Square). According to him, apart from the mass-meeting, a procession was initially planned, but the city authorities did not allow it. In reply to the correspondent's remark that a special status was invented by the authorities for Independence Square in order not to allow demonstrations there, Mr Kalyakin said that this status is in force, but the ban on demonstrations does not apply to state holidays, including May Day.

Belarus: Anti-Russian, Ultraright-Wing Feelings on the Rise

MM0105082396 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
30 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Starikevich under the "Lightning Analysis" rubric: "Ultraright-Wing Sentiments Growing in Belarus"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minsk — The main conclusion that can be drawn from the results of three mass opposition actions staged over the past month is that a certain section of Belarusian society is rapidly becoming radicalized. Only a year ago it was possible to speak only in purely theoretical terms of the existence of ultraright-wingers in Belarus. The situation has now started to change.

Almost the first act of the participants in a mourning procession devoted to the 10th anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Electric Power Station was to burn the Russian flag. The anti-Russian thrust of the action was clearly maintained subsequently, right up until the one-minute's silence honoring the memory of Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Representatives of the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian People's Self-Defense arrived from Ukraine especially to support the Belarusian opposition. In addition, a local counterpart of that organization is being formed in Belarus — the "White Legion." Quite recently this name was known only to those who take a very great interest in political movements. But the "legionnaires" have made their involvement in recent actions quite plain and can now count on an influx of new forces.

All this is a kind of echo, a response by a certain section of society to the tough policy pursued by the republic's leadership toward its opponents. It is no longer a question of its inability to consolidate society: In the present situation hardly anyone at all would be up to such a task. Sometimes the actions of the authorities simply provoke a reaction verging on a foul from those who disagree with their policy.

In this way the Belarusian leadership is also doing Moscow a disservice. Previously Russia always had in Belarus at least a well-wishing neighbor, and not just at the level of the authorities but also at that of ordinary citizens. The situation has now started to change, and we do not know what will happen tomorrow. It is paradoxical, but the integration processes being promoted by the Kremlin and by Alyaksandr Lukashenka might have the reverse effect.

Oil is being poured on the flames by information that is being disseminated to the effect that the first assistance given to Belarus by Russia as a result of signing the Community Treaty was in the form of 50 OMON [special purpose police detachment] officers who arrived in Minsk from Moscow as instructors. The Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs refutes this information, but many people's trust in official propaganda was undermined long ago.

The next mass political actions are scheduled for 1 May. In addition to Communists and trade unions, the social democrats and their allies are planning to take to the streets. The Belarus People's Front will most likely boycott the May Day festivities. If they take place at all, that is, since there is information that the president intends to impose a moratorium on all demonstrations and rallies. Vladimir Zametalin, deputy head of the presidential administration, neither ruled out nor confirmed such a possibility in a conversation with IZVESTIYA's correspondent. But the authorities will hardly be able to resolve in this way the problem of growing radicalism in opposition circles.

Moldova

Moldova: Snegur: Economic Reform 'Irreversible'

AU3004152296 Chisinau INFOTAG in English
2120 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bucharest, April 29 (INFOTAG) — The economic reforms in Moldova are irreversible, President Mircea Snegur stated over Euronews TV network in Bucharest, where he took part in a business forum of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC.)

The head of state emphasized that Moldova is holding a leading position in the reform field among all CIS countries. In his words, the Moldovan legislation ensures favorable conditions for foreign investors.

Speaking about privatization, President Snegur said the republic has entered its second phase — privatization for cash. The 1995-1996 privatization program envisaged turning to private ownership about 40 large enterprises provided that foreign investors are allowed to obtain up to 60 percent shares of these objects. The president has spoken up for a more active economic cooperation of Black Sea countries.

In Snegur's words, ethnic minorities constituting some 35 percent of the Moldovan population have real possibilities to preserve their national identity. "Neither the Constitution, nor a single law infringe on their rights," Snegur stated.

In that context he stressed that the 1992 armed conflict in the country's eastern region was a political, not an ethnic one.

"This implies the efforts of certain political forces to preserve the former totalitarian regime," Mircea Snegur said.

Moldova: Council of Europe To Investigate Creanga Dismissal

AU3004144996 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2050 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 29/4/1996 (BASA-press) — The Moldovan Presidency has always favored cooperation with the Council of Europe (CE) despite allegations in the media that the visit of CE experts might be to the detriment of President Snegur, presidential adviser Petru Dascal told BASA.

"Though we were not officially informed on the recent statements made by the Moldovan delegation in Strasbourg, we consider it is normal that the CE is highly interested and even concerned about the fate of young democracies," said Dascal.

He implied that the CE experts, who will arrive in Chisinau, will be apprised of "General Creanga's dismissal from defense minister and the manner in which Moldova respects the CE membership obligations."

The Chisinau media wrote that the Moldovan delegation notified the CE about Creanga's dismissal and expressed concern over the violation of the Constitution.

The official MOLDPRES news agency reported that the CE proposed to the Council of Ministers to closely watch the events in Moldova, while European Parliamentary Assembly will send in May-June a group of European parliamentarians and experts of the CE juridical and political commissions to Chisinau.

Moldova: Defense Ministry To Conclude Accord With Germany

AU3004145596 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2050 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 29/4/1996 (BASA-press) — The Moldovan Defense Ministry intends to conclude a cooperation agreement with Bundeswehr, the German Defense Department.

Viorel Cibotaru, defense ministry spokesman, told BASA that a Bundeswehr delegation headed by Colonel G. Gericke, head of the Bundeswehr military policy division, is on visit in Moldova.

The German delegation met today Pavel Creanga, Moldovan defense minister. The parties discussed the draft agreement on military cooperation, as well as the draft agreements on staff training and exchange.

Cibotaru said the draft cooperation agreement provides for information exchange, consultations, and juridical assistance.

Moldovan officers will also attend professional retraining courses in Germany.

Cibotaru said only one Moldovan officer attended German language courses in Germany as part of an individual program.

The Moldovan Defense Ministry has concluded cooperation agreements with the U.S., Ukrainian, Romanian, Belarus, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greek Defense Departments.

Military sources told BASA that earlier Moldova sought military cooperation with several dozens of states, and many of them already gave an affirmative answer.

Moldova: Commentary: 'No Significant Progress' in Dniester Talks

AU3004153496 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2050 GMT 29 Apr 96

["Political Commentary" by BASA-press]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 29/4/1996 (BASA-press) — There was no significant progress at the April round of the Snegur-Smirnov talks. The parties only signed the agreement on repair of bridges across the Dniester River destroyed during the 1992 fights. The negotiators did not advance much on the special status for the Dniester region. Earlier the Chisinau leadership was looking forward to the meeting between Moldovan President Snegur, Dniester leader Smirnov, and Russian President Yeltsin, which was scheduled for this May for the signing of a document on general principles of the Dniester region's status. But in their press statements, both Moldovan President Mircea Snegur and Dniester leader Igor Smirnov made it clear that no fundamental document would be signed in May and no significant progress would be achieved until presidential elections in Russia.

A participant in the talks has said the situation is worse than it is thought. Tiraspol still holds its earlier stance about the status insisting upon "gradual establishment of state juridical relations" between Moldova and the Dniester region. Tiraspol has not reacted in any way to the concession made by Chisinau, which a year ago was talking only about a special status and now is ready to grant autonomy.

It is obvious the present Kremlin administration cannot but be interested in the Dniester dispute settlement. The resolution of the conflict in one of the former Soviet republics on clearly pro-Russian terms favorable to Dniester would help Boris Yeltsin in presidential elections. This underlies the draft memorandum on the basic principles for conflict solution and the mediators' guarantees submitted by Yuriy Karlov, Russian president's special envoy. The draft actually offers equal negotiating rights to Chisinau and Tiraspol, while Yuriy Karlov's proposals concern the signing of an agreement between two equal subjects and not between the central and local authorities.

That is why it is unacceptable for Chisinau. Officially neither did Tiraspol authorities approve of it. Igor Smirnov said "all earlier agreements between negotiating parties have been concentrated in these proposals" and "some of these proposals will not be incorporated in the final document." Official circles in Chisinau say Tiraspol hinders the talks awaiting the results of the presidential elections in Russia. It is a reasonable expectation, because if Yeltsin leaves the Kremlin Moscow's position may change radically. Nor can one overlook Dniester's traditional ties with the leftist majority in the Russian Duma, which is far from giving credit to Boris Yeltsin for the stabilized situation in the Dniester region. And if the communist candidate wins the elections, Tiraspol will be able to conduct negotiations in a much more favorable setting.

Chisinau is in a rather delicate situation. On one hand, Moldovan officials are interested in Yeltsin's victory, but on the other Moscow's draft is unacceptable for Moldova. All this proves the earlier forecasts of an official from the U.S. Department of State, who had stated that the Dniester dispute would not be solved this year.

However, analysts do not rule out that Moscow could pull the wires to have the draft conventional memorandum on the basic principles of Dniester's special status signed before the presidential elections. During the talks in Chisinau, expert groups were charged to draft a common document by 8 May, which would be debated at the meeting scheduled for 11 May. But this seems unrealistic given the parties' positions. This will be the directions of Kremlin's diplomatic efforts. It is not clear how efficient these efforts will be given the uncertain political future of Boris Yeltsin.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan: State Council Meeting Marks New Stage in Economic Reform

LD3004160296 Ashgabat TURKMEN PRESS in Russian 0700 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text]

The Country's Economic Sector: A New Stage of Development

A meeting of the State Council, held by [President] Saparmurad Turkmenbashy [Niyazov] in the form of a telephone conference in which almost all economic sector leaders participated, marked a new stage in the reform of the Turkmen economy. It will at least go down in the history of the national economy as a turning point in sectoral development.

In a solid package of documents signed by the president last week, emphasis was put on the necessity of improving the state's investment policy and increasing managerial efficiency in the agro-industrial sector — one of the basic branches of Turkmenistan's economy. The resolutions develop and give specific expression to the ideas and positions announced by Saparmurad Turkmenbashy at the last meeting of the People's Council last December.

In particular, in describing Turkmenistan's investment policy, the head of state noted that it needs a more systematic and detailed approach. In connection with this, the need to set up a state foreign investment agency under the aegis of the president of the country was recognized. It will be endowed with the authority to consider all matters connected with the attraction of foreign capital to the state's economy, including the legal and economic examination of projects and control over their fulfillment.

The agency will submit for the president's approval proposals for state investment policy and the management of foreign investments.

The topicality and relevance of this decision is dictated by the high tempo of the development of the country's economy. It is aimed at attracting foreign investments worth up to $20 billion for the financing of priority projects in the fuel and power, the agro-industrial sectors, in the sphere of transport and communications, the use of computers, mechanical engineering, and medical industries by the year 2002.

In the course of the conference, Saparmurad Turkmenbashy paid particular attention to analyzing the situation in agriculture over the last few months. He said that there is an obvious need to completely change the management system in the agro-industrial complex, and announced decisions on this.

The essence of reform in the branch is to make all the departments and services more mobile and targeted at solving their own priority tasks, whether these be sowing grain crops, organizing technical supplies to peasant farms, or processing agricultural products. For this reason the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Processing Industry of Turkmenistan is abolished. For the present, it will simply be the Ministry of Agriculture, to whose jurisdiction the industrial and technical service association Selservis and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences are to be transferred. Associations for the food industry, the cotton processing industry, for bread products, for vegetable and fruit products trade, and for the construction of agricultural facilities are to receive independent status and to be directly subordinated to the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

Finally, the sector has a completely new structure — the State Fund for the Development of Agriculture. All resources from foreign [agricultural] economic activity will be accumulated here, and will then be allocated to financing the most promising aspects of agriculture.

Along with the personnel changes, these decisions will, in the opinion of specialists, have a significant influence on the pace of development of the agro-industrial sector, and, which is no less significant, promote the emergence of a sector of private agricultural producers.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Supreme Assembly Approves Dropping Soviet Place Names

LD3004124696 Tashkent NARODNOYE SLOVO in Russian 30 Apr 96 p1

[FBIS Translated Text] Resolution by the Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan to rename the town of Ulyanovo in Dzhizak Region:

The Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan resolves to grant the petition by the head of the Dzhizak regional administration to change the name of the town of Ulyanovo to Dashtobod.

[Signed] Uzbek Supreme Assembly Chairman E. Khalilov.
[Dated] Tashkent, 26 April 1996.

Resolution by the Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan to rename Komsomolabad District in Andidzhan Region:

The Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan resolves to grant the petition by the head of Andidzhan

Regional administration to change the name of Komsomolabad District to Ulughnor District.

[Signed] Uzbek Supreme Assembly Chairman E. Khalilov.
[Dated] Tashkent, 26 April 1996.

Uzbekistan: Customs Official on Decrease in Volume of Barter Operations

LD0105105596 Tashkent BIZNES VESTNIK VOSTOKA in Russian 26 Apr 96 p 16

[Unattributed report: "An Uncharacteristic Phenomenon is Declining"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A trend toward a decrease in the volume of barter operations is being observed in Uzbekistan. According to figures from the State Committee for Statistics and Forecasting of Uzbekistan, the share of barter operations in the total volume of exports has reduced by more than half. Whereas barter deals in 1994 made up 17.1 percent of the total export volume, in 1995 this figure was 8.1 percent. [passage omitted]

What are the results of the execution of export contracts based on barter? The head of interregional department for monitoring the legality of barter operations at the Main Customs Directorate of the State Tax Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, A.A. Abdusamatov, tells a BIZNES VESTNIK VOSTOKA correspondent about this.

[Correspondent] Akbarali Abduganiyevich, the customs services deal with the registration of barter contracts. How many of them were concluded last year?

[Abdusamatov] Last year, about 7,000 export contracts were concluded. Over 4,000 of them were on a barter basis. The largest proportion of barter deals were in Tashkent city and Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana Regions. Most of these contracts were concluded for amounts between 1 and 5 million soms.

[Correspondent] What is imported and exported under barter contracts?

[Abdusamatov] The main items exported from Uzbekistan by barter are agricultural products, knitted and ready-made garments, construction materials, and raw materials. The number of barter deals to export finished goods produced in Uzbekistan remains insignificant. Among the imports into our country last year, we received timber, foodstuffs, and spare parts for agricultural machinery. The proportion of contracts to import equipment and production lines is insignificant.

[Correspondent] Barter deals in Uzbekistan are permitted only with countries of the CIS and the Baltic states. With which CIS countries have they been carried out most actively?

[Abdusamatov] Most deals were concluded last year with consumers in Russia — 72 percent, followed by Kazakhstan at 14 percent, and Belarus and Ukraine at 3 percent each.

[Correspondent] Who showed the greater preference for barter deals — the state or the private sector?

[Abdusamatov] The largest proportion of such trading operations was carried out by state enterprises at 40 percent, followed by joint-stock companies on 17 percent, private firms on 16 percent, joint ventures on 5 percent, and other economic entities on 21 percent. To look at it from the geographical point of view, the largest number of barter contracts concluded by state enterprises was in Samarkand, Tashkent, and Namangan Regions and the city of Tashkent. The highest number of barter operations carried out by private firms was in Khorezm Region.

[Correspondent] What problems and violations are the most typical in the execution of export contracts based on barter?

[Abdusamatov] The main ones are unequal exchange, incomplete delivery, and violations of the deadline for return deliveries.

We checked 272 barter contracts in Bukhara Region. On the basis of those contracts, goods worth a total of $9,450,300 were exported from the region, and goods worth $6,917,700 were received in exchange. The Buyuk Turon joint-stock company in Gizhduvan shipped goods to CIS countries in the 1992-1995 period under 15 contracts worth a total of 3,861,100 soms. Only 780,300 soms were received in return. [passage omitted]

Last year we inspected 959 organizations and enterprises carrying out export operations on a barter basis and investigated the documentation for 1,883 contracts out of the 3,717 registered. A total of 526 violations of conditions and the schedule for their fulfilment, 320 infringements of customs rules and 196 other breaches were found. Supply shortfalls under barter came to over 80,104,000 soms. A total of 159 cases were passed on to the prosecutor's office, 170 were sent to the law-enforcement bodies and criminal proceedings were instituted in 23 of them.

[Correspondent] Are there any changes in the legislation regulating the mechanism for implementing barter deals?

[Abdusamatov] Two documents remain the basic ones. They are a decree by the president of Uzbekistan dated 11 April 1995, entitled "Additional Measures To Regulate Export and Import Operations," and Resolution 343 of the republic's Cabinet of Ministers of 28 August 1995, with the same title. Under these documents all barter operations are carried out as an exception with the permission of the Cabinet of Ministers and the heads of regional administrations. A total of 35 groups of goods, mainly raw materials, may be exported with the permission of the Cabinet of Ministers. All the rest may be exported with the permission of heads of regional administrations. Eight types of highly-liquid goods (cotton, uranium, nonferrous metals, oil, and others) may be exported under barter contracts in convertible currency only. In order to register a barter contract, the permission of the Cabinet of Ministers or a head of regional administration for their sale is required, along with the original and a copy of the contract with a note of registration at a bank or the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, certificates of origin and quality and other documents, depending on what kinds of goods you are exporting.

For goods subject to licensing and quotas, it is necessary to have the original and a copy of the license issued by the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations.

Armenia

Armenia: President Visits Russian Troops on Turkish Border

LD3004163196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1430 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, April 30 (Interfax) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan visited the Artashansk unit of Russian border guards on the Armenian-Turkish border Tuesday, the border troop headquarters told Interfax.

Ter-Petrosyan visited this area because Turkish guns and artillery fired on Russian border guard positions from the Tazaki outpost during the night of April 24, the representative said.

Armenia: President Tells Troops Russia, Armenia Will Never Fight

NC3004212096 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1700 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, accompanied by the Armenian National Security Minister Serzh Sargisyan, today visited the Artashat detachment of the Russian frontier troops [words indistinct]. After inspecting the Artashat border detachment, the president and the officials accompanying him visited the detachment's grounds, mess halls, classrooms, recreation room, the local Russian school, and familiarized themselves with the servicemen's working and living conditions.

The detachment is preserving good traditions. The Armenian citizens are serving here alongside Russian citizens. At present, the number of the former exceeds half of entire personnel. Of those, some 40 have gained the relevant qualifications and now form the core of the detachment's officers corps.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan spoke during the meeting. Levon Ter-Petrosyan stated that democratic Russia is a gravitational force. In his words, if Russia remains a democratic country, than all the former Soviet peoples will gather around it. As regards Armenia, according to Levon Ter-Petrosyan, there exists no anti-Russian forces here. Here a competition is going on to show who loves the Russians more. Often these are not proper things to say. Throughout the centuries-long Armenian-Russian relations, there has been no case where Russian and Armenian soldiers were in opposing trenches. Armenians and Russians have never fought against each other. The president assured that such a thing will never happen, regardless of the form of the regimes in Armenia and Russia. [words indistinct]

Armenia: Ter-Petrosyan Backs Yeltsin for Russian Presidency

LD0105054096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0438 GMT 1 May 96

[By Tigran Liloyan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Artashat May 1 (Itar-Tass) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan backed his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin for a new term of presidency saying that "if Russia remains democratic, all peoples of the former Soviet Union will consolidate around it".

"Russia is a factor of stability, friendship and understanding between all our peoples. And the democratic Russia is personified by the current authority headed by Boris Yeltsin", Ter-Petrosyan said on Tuesday at a meeting with Russian border guards protecting the Armenian frontier with Turkey in the Artashat district.

He admitted that Yeltsin had made mistakes during his rule "as it is characteristic of any authority". However, "Boris Yeltsin has proved in the five years that he consistently carries out reforms and the democratic line of authority", Ter-Petrosyan said.

"The democratic Russia poses no threat to the outside world, including to Armenia", the president said.

Armenia: Karabakh Figure Cited on Alleged Attack on Plane

NC3004150196 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1817 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, April 29 (NOYAN TAPAN)—Baku radio citing Azeri Defense Ministry announced April 25 that the day before Armenia's anti-aircraft forces fired Yak-40 passenger plane, which was flying from Naftalan to Baku. The crew had to make an emergency landing. No casualties were reported.

Naftalan is located near north-eastern border of the Karabakh Republic, at a distance of 60 km from Armenia's borders.

BBC radio quoting a representative of the Azeri Airlines Company reported that three bullet holes were found on plane's fuselage. Company's representative Arif Hasanov said that Armenia and Azerbaijan had concluded an agreement in accordance with which Armenian planes can fly over the Azeri territory while Azeri planes — over the territories of Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh, and that the incident was the first reported in recent time. Azerbaijan has already addressed a protest to Armenia and is now expecting explanations. At the same time Hasanov did not rule out that that provocation was committed by "the third side".

Karabakh Defense Minister's Aide Major Leonid Tsaturyan said that Azeri planes had twice, on April 17 and 24, violated Karabakh's air space. In both cases the Karabakh anti-aircraft system was put on alert. However, as the planes, which violated the air space were not military, Karabakh troops did not undertake any defense-related actions.

Leonid Tsaturyan alleged that shots were fired at a plane from check points situated on the Karabakh's border with Azerbaijan. At the same time he said it was unclear which side shot at the plane. "It is quite possible that the plane intruded Karabakh's airspace by chance, but I do not exclude that it was an attempt to make us take serious measures", Major Tsaturyan said.

However, according to last evidence, no protest from Azerbaijan has been received by Armenia's Foreign Ministry.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Source on Role of 'U.S. Special Services' in Dudayev Death

NC3004174896 Baku TURAN in English
1300 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/30.04.96/TURAN—Today the U.S. Embassy in Baku distributed official statement of the U.S. Government in response to publication about U.S. involvement in the assassination of Dudayev.

The statement reads that "suggestion of American involvement in the death of Chechen rebel leader Dudayev is without any basis in fact whatsoever."

The tragic death of Dudayev is one in a series of tragic events over the past few years in Chechnya, which culminated in the December 1994 invasion that has led to the death of 30,000-40,000 innocent civilians.

The statement urges all parties to the conflict to focus on the restoration of peace and respect for human rights in Chechnya. The U.S. Government also urges the interested parties to allow the OSCE assistance group and international relief groups freedom of movement to carry out their humanitarian work and full access to detainees and people in need of humanitarian assistance.

* Previously the Chechen source investigating the reasons of Dudayev's death told TURAN agency that U.S. special services have provided assistance to Russia to assassinate Dudayev.

Azerbaijan: Kazimirov Views Approach to Solution of Karabakh Problem

NC3004175396 Baku TURAN in English
1303 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/30.04.96/TURAN—"On April 29 we started negotiations with President Aliyev in absence of the press. Today the negotiations will be continued", special representative of Russia's President to the talks on settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, representative of Russian co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Conference (MC), Vladimir Kazimirov, told TURAN's correspondent.

He said the tasks of the visit are to inform about the position of the co-chairman of the OSCE MC, Valentin Lozinskiy, to inform about discussion of the ways of settlement of the conflict by UN SC, to inform about another actions of the Minsk Group and to appeal to the sides that the heads of delegations must receive instructions about the necessity to pursue more constructive and flexible policy during another round of the talks.

Kazimirov said that he has arrived in Baku from Yerevan. "The position of the Armenian side has been more constructive than during my previous visits", he said.

"We must seek for mutually acceptable compromises. Now we have the opportunity to discuss several moments of settlement, which we failed to coordinate during previous rounds, with the sides individually and offer alternative formulas to the sides", Vladimir Kazimirov noted.

Kazimirov also noted that he did not bring any new proposals on settlement with him. "I will not like to call them proposals. They are most likely variations on this theme. We have offered to introduce some modifications in the process, but it is not new proposals", he said. He believes that basic characteristics of settlement are widely known. "There is consensus in the issue related to observation of territorial integrity, though not all parties to the conflict agree with that. There is also consensus concerning high level of independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, though one warring party is not enthusiastic about that. It is a common knowledge that it is necessary to ensure free corridor between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia through Lachin", Kazimirov mentioned.

Russian diplomat said that final settlement model in the aspect of status may be chosen with account of the international practice. "Russian examples, for example analogy with the status of Tatarstan and Chechnya and the practice of the Western Europe, can be used here. However, famous formulation about intention to obtain the highest status is difficult, it does not satisfy Armenians, since they are interested in concrete essence of this formula. This is the difficulty. We do not know thus issue yet", Kazimirov said.

Kazimirov said that on the eve of the second anniversary of the cease-fire regime we intensively negotiate with the warring parties about necessity of absolute exchange of prisoners and hostages in accordance with Geneva Convention on War Victims from August 12, 1949. "Active military activities have been already completed, POWs must be immediately freed and repatriated", he noted.

Touching upon possible visit of Russia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Yevgeniy Primakov, to the region, Vladimir Kazimirov mentioned that concrete terms of this visit are yet to be fixed, but there is common intention. "The terms of the visit will be fixed in the near future", Russian diplomat said.

Kazimirov refused to comment on President Aliyev's statement that if peace negotiations do not bring results, Azerbaijan will liberate occupied lands by force.

This evening Vladimir Kazimirov is to leave for Moscow.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Interviewed on Economy, EU

LD2904124196 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0724 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Regular Monday studio interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze by correspondent Nato Oniani—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Oniani] Mr. President, last week, a cooperation and partnership agreement with the European Union was signed. This agreement is very significant for the Transcaucasian countries on the whole. The European Union has also signed an agreement with Armenia and Azerbaijan. This agreement is very important from both political and economic points of view. The presidents of the three countries stood before the European Union in Luxembourg. One more thing: The signing of the agreement with the European Union is one more sign of the support by the European structures for Georgian reforms. As the above agreement includes economic aspects, could you tell us about last week's economic events?

[Shevardnadze] Thank you. Good morning. The signing by Georgia and the Transcaucasian countries of a cooperation and partnership agreement with the European Union can be assessed as a significant event in Georgia's integration into the international commonwealth. The European Union has greatly assisted Georgia economically. Tens of millions of ECU have been spent on our country over the last four years. The eastward expansion of the European Union, as well as the signing of the agreement, will create a legal basis for developing both political, trade, and economic relations. For Georgia, this would mean the strengthening of its sovereignty, the restoration of its territorial integrity, democratic changes within the country, and a guarantee for the irreversibility of the process of embarking on a market economy.

It was noted at the president's meeting with big business circles and influential people that Georgia is attractive not only from the point of view of the realistic prospects of the Caspian oil pipeline, the restoration of the historic Silk Way, and the Europe-Caucasus-Asia corridor, but also from the point of view of vast fields of hydroresources, tourism, and spas which can be developed. The most important thing is that a legal basis has already been created and the relevant law and order has been established in the country for the protection of foreign investments.

The economic part of the agreement envisages cooperation with European countries and European structures practically in all fields of the economy, industry, building construction, information, communications, science, technology, finances, money and credit, politics and customs — nearly all fields. [passage omitted]

Now, as for the economic situation in our country for last week: According to information from the relevant departments, one can say that since last year, the economy has gradually been stepping from the process of stability onto a difficult road of restoration and revival. In the first quarter [of 1996], products worth 624 million lari have been produced in Georgia. This is 14 percent higher compared to the first quarter of 1995. A rise in production has been noted in all spheres of the national economy, except building and construction. Agricultural production stood at 134 percent, transport approximately at 110 percent, communications at 11 percent, trade at 151 percent. A total volume of goods turnover was 80 percent. [passage omitted]

According to the Ministry of the Economy, enterprises have gradually enhanced their production. The issue of a stable power supply to the Rustavi Azoti [nitrogen] factory, the Zestaponi ferrous metals factory, and the Chiatura manganite factory must be resolved for once and for all. [passage omitted]

The situation in power supplies in the country in the first half of April has worsened. Due to the nonavailability of funds and the nonpayments of the cost for fuel, gas supplies have been cut off to the Tbilsresi [Tbilisi regional power station] power station. The rise in the daily production of power from 11 million kHz to 15 kHz could not compensate for the general fall in power production and thus, the indices of the power production and consumption have fallen once again. Emergency measures must be taken in order to mobilize financial resources. According to the Sakenergo [Georgian Power] Department, only 15 to 20 percent of the payments for consumed power have been made. The Tbilsresi power station alone needs about 5.5 million lari a month let alone the reconstruction works before the flood season starts, the repayments of debts and the wages in arrears. [passage omitted]

According to information from the Tax Inspectorate, 17 million lari's worth of tax payments have been made in the first three weeks of April and 56 million lari has been received since the beginning of the year. This is what we were expecting, and it exceeds last year's figures by 33 million lari — that is, two-fold.

About 300 organizations have been checked by the Tax Inspectorate since the beginning of April, as a result of which, because of breaches of the tax legislation, the budget gained additional 2 million lari, of which the budget has already realistically received over 1.5 million lari.

Since the beginning of April, up until 25 April inclusive, 3.5 million lari has been received through the customs system and budget revenue, and over 10 million lari since the beginning of the year, which is 11 percent higher than last year's revenue. [passage omitted]

This is a brief outline of the economic situation in our country following the signing of the agreement with the European Union.

[Onani] Thank you. During your visit to Brussels, you met NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. This was not your first visit to NATO. In your address to the European Union and NATO, you especially stressed Russia's relations with the European Union and NATO.

[Shevardnadze] I have already spoken about what took place at the NATO meeting and there is no need to reiterate. As for your specific question, this is what I have to say: relations between Russia and NATO are one of the key problems of the modern world. I have concluded from my dialogues at NATO that its expansion is not on the current year's agenda. I think that this span of time is long enough for both sides to seek ways to resolve this issue, ruling out a new confrontation and new opposition. I think Russia and NATO will reinforce the processes of integration which were established after the end of the Cold War in all spheres of life, both in Europe and the whole of Eurasia.

[Onani] The patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia, Aleksiy II, is on a five-day visit to Georgia. Today, you will meet the Russian patriarch.

[Shevardnadze] A visit by the patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia, Aleksiy II, to Georgia must be viewed as a special event, of course. His talks with Georgian Catholicos-Patriarch, His Beatitude Ilia II, their joint mass at the Sioni and Svetitskoveli cathedrals, make indelible impressions. The importance of the visit is wider than the issues of cooperation between the two churches. Practically, this is a dialogue about important issues of relations between peoples of the same creed and the two states. [passage omitted]

[Onani] I would like to ask you the last question. This is what I started today's interview with — the agreement signed with the European Union. One of the significant moments was the appearance of the presidents of the three states [Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia] on the international arena. The decade of Armenian culture has started in Tbilisi. Anything that concerns our nearest neighbors is probably very important for us.

[Shevardnadze] I would like to reiterate what I have already said. The signing of the agreement by the three presidents was also significant from the point of view that the processes of internal integration of the Caucasian states, cooperation at the level of regions, and the establishment of peace in the Caucasus have gained a new momentum. Europe and the European Union — you are aware of the European Union's influence — have given us, the three states, a green light to seek our own resources and possibilities to overcome our current difficulties, including conflicts, and to put into action the Caucasian factor.

As for the decade of Armenian culture, I would like to welcome its participants warm-heartedly. [passage omitted] The arts are assuming the function of establishing peace, friendship, and stability in the Caucasus. I am not exaggerating. Georgia can say an important word in this matter, and we must help this cause.

Georgia: EU Accord Provides Platform for 'Caucasian Integration'

AU3004155396 Tbilisi REZONANSI in Georgian 25-26 Apr 96 pp 1, 16

[Report by Lasha Tughushi: "'The Three Transcaucasian States Should Unite Forces,' Stated Kinkel During the Visit to Belgium by Shevardnadze, Aliyev, and Ter-Petrosyan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The three presidents have accepted Germany's patronage. We, Europeans, should have our interests in the Caucasian region, which adjoins Europe, in order to establish political stability and start an economic upsurge," stated German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel at a meeting with the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in Luxemburg.

On 22 April, an "accord on partnership and cooperation" between the Transcaucasian states and the EU was concluded in the Kirschberg Palace in Luxemburg.

The accord was signed on the one hand by the three foreign ministers of the Transcaucasian states and, on the other, by European Commissioner Van den Broek. In addition, the agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of the 14 EU member states, which imparts particular political significance to the document.

"A new most important stage is beginning for Georgia," pointed out Foreign Minister Irakli Menagharishvili in a conversation with a REZONANSI correspondent. "Humanitarian aid is being replaced by more important development programs."

The accord signed in Luxemburg signifies close cooperation between the EU and the Transcaucasian states both from the economic and social and political points of view. From the purely economic point of view, it is planned to develop trade and investment in the Transcaucasus, promote an increase in economic potential, and speed up the process of transferring to a market economy.

As regards the political part of the accord, it is planned to form and develop the corresponding mechanism for political dialogue between the EU and the Transcaucasian states.

According to commentators, the accord gives the three Transcaucasian states the possibility of fairly close political cooperation with the EU.

It is significant that Klaus Kinkel established fairly clearly Germany's interests in the Caucasian region. In particular, he stated: "The three states should unite forces and work together." According to him, Transcaucasia is situated between Europe and Asia and this determines the strategic importance of the region in the sphere of peace and stability.

On 22 April, the presidents of the Transcaucasian states were to have signed an important political declaration. This did not take place. Irakli Menagharishvili explained that the Azerbaijani side demanded at the last moment that the principle of territorial integrity be fixed in the document, which evoked a negative reaction on the part of the Armenian delegation.

"Presidential elections are to be held in Armenia, which creates great difficulties," Eduard Shevardnadze told journalists. It is hard to imagine that Ter-Petrosyan, who came to power on the crest of the Karabakh wave, will agree to Karabakh remaining part of Azerbaijan. In addition, the situation is made more complex by Armenia's claims to fulfilling the role of leader in the Caucasus and also by the very low quality of mutual cooperation between the Trancaucasian countries (including Georgia and Armenia) both from the political and economic point of view.

It is significant to note what Ter-Petrosyan said when asked whether Armenia would adhere to the so-called Tbilisi declaration "for a peaceful Caucasus." In particular, he stated that he knew nothing about this declaration, which was a mild rebuke to Shevardnadze, and added that he would adhere to the declaration only when the Karabakh problem had been solved. This practically signifies a refusal to sign the declaration.

It is significant that Ter-Petrosyan delivered his report at the press conference in French, unlike Shevardnadze and Aliyev who spoke in their native languages.

The importance of Caucasian integration was emphasized many times during the visit. "Integration in the Caucasus is of no less importance than rapprochement with the EU. We are now starting to understand the importance of the Caucasus. The accord adopted here does not contradict the obligations that we have assumed before the CIS and the organization of Black Sea countries," pointed out Shevardnadze at the press conference.

In Aliyev's view, processes of integration between Azerbaijan and Georgia are developing intensively, whereas, in the case of Armenia, "Azerbaijan, as well as Armenia, have, to all intents and purposes, lost a natural economic partner (first and foremost, each other). In order to restore the natural situation, Armenia should withdraw its troops from the territory it has occupied," stated Aliyev.

According to commentators, the unstable situation in the Caucasus is the result of the Russian and Iranian factors. They believe that Russia is making good use of Armenia's aggression toward Azerbaijan, which is creating an environment hostile toward Armenia. Armenia is being forced to look for support in Russia. All this enables Russia to control the situation in the region.

In both Luxemburg and Brussels, the three presidents emphasized Russia's role in the Caucasian region. "The conflict in Abkhazia can be resolved, if Russia wants to do this," stated Shevardnadze.

In Ter-Petrosyan's view, the conflicts in the Caucasus cannot be settled without Russia. When asked about the expansion of NATO, he replied that preserving democracy in Russia was more important than NATO's expansion eastward.

It is natural that the step taken toward the EU will cause certain anxiety on the part of big countries (that have interests in the Transcaucasus).

When asked by a REZONANSI correspondent whether one could expect a sharp reaction from Russia, a high-ranking state official who wished to remain anonymous replied that it was to be expected and Russia's political forces, whether they like it or not, will be forced to adapt to the new political realities. As regards the United States, in his view, Shevardnadze is planning to visit Washington in the near future.

Shevardnadze spoke about the need for special relations between Russia and NATO at the press conference held together with NATO Secretary General Solana. "NATO should establish special relations with Russia," he pointed out. According to him, the inevitability of NATO's expansion eastward has been conditioned by the Russian Duma's scandalous decision on the restoration of the USSR. Shevardnadze's visit to NATO headquarters acquired particular importance following the conclusion of the accord with the EU. As the president pointed out, the NATO secretary general accepted his invitation to visit Georgia. He said that this would irritate certain people and added forthwith that this does not compromise anyone's interests.

When asked by a REZONANSI correspondent whether one could expect NATO to participate in settling the conflict in Abkhazia, Shevardnadze pointed out that, following the resolution of the conflict in Bosnia, this variant could not be excluded. In the view of experts, Georgia has taken an important step toward rapprochement with Europe and the necessity of well-planned initiatives for integration in the Caucasian region has shaped out.

Georgia: Differences Emerge With Russia on Guarding Sea Border

LD0105094596 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1450 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 30 Apr — Georgian Ambassador to Russia Vazha Lortkipanidze has told an IBERIA correspondent that negotiations with the Russian side on the inspection of ships sailing to Abkhazia were continuing. Representatives of the Russian Federal Border Service stated during the negotiations that there is no legal basis for the stationing of Russian border guards in Georgia and, therefore, requested that an appropriate agreement be signed between the two countries.

Lortkipanidze said that differences of opinion on the issue emerged because Russia requested that the ports of Poti and Batumi become bases for the troops. Georgia wants Russian border troops to guard only offshore areas; that is, outside the border.

It was decided during the negotiations that a list of essential humanitarian goods to be tranported by sea to Abkhazia over a period of two to three months, which would also specify their quantity, should be drawn up. The Georgian side is demanding that Georgian border guards participate in inspecting the goods.

Latvia

Latvia: Foreign Minister Responds to Russian Expert's Threat

WS3004142596 Tallinn BNS in English
1249 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riga, Apr 30, BNS — Allegations of a Russian invasion to the Baltic states after they have joined NATO encourages Latvia to draw closer to the alliance, said Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs.

Birkavs made the comment Monday in view of Russian defense anaylst Anatoliy Surikov's statements about the use of military force.

Surikov, who is considered to be the author of Russia's military doctrine, told the Estonian POSTIMEES newspaper last week that Russian troops will invade Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia if they dare to join NATO.

In Surikov's opinion, the Western countries would not help the Baltics in case of Russian invasion to avoid confrontation with Russia.

Birkavs claims that the question also is about whether the Russian government is ready to fight with the West because of the Baltic states.

Birkavs also reminded that the repeated allegations of military invasion is still not the stance of the official Moscow.

Vladimir Lukin, head of the Russian Duma foreign affairs committee, reiterated that his country opposes the possible eastward expansion of the defense alliance.

"Judging by the implications of our meeting the Baltic states may feel safe that Russia does not claim them," Birkavs said.

In Birkavs' opinion, Latvia can make the choice itself whether to integrate into NATO or become part of Russia's strategic interests.

Latvia: Russian Official Doubts Latvia's Admittance Into NATO

LD3004205496 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1739 GMT 30 Apr 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] RIGA, April 30 (Interfax) — Latvian authorities' unjust attitude towards non-citizens, most of whom consider Russian to be their native language, and irritating calls for Latvia's admission to NATO are the major impediments to the development of Russian-Latvian relations, Russian State Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman Vladimir Lukin told a news conference in Riga Monday, on the results of his visit to Latvia.

He said "Latvian authorities' attitude to non-citizens does not meet the standards of the Council of Europe, of which both Latvia and Russia are members." However, it was established during the talks with Latvian parliament members that "the sides recognize the existing problems and do not refuse to resolve them," he said.

Lukin believes "it is quite obvious that Latvia will not be admitted into NATO either in the near or in the distant future, that is why Riga's permanent calls for its admission to the Alliance irritate Russia and significantly hamper relations between the two countries."

Latvia: Minister Returns From Oil Talks in Russia

LD3004153896 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian
1301 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Eriks Kaza, minister of state for industry, property, and privatization, on his return from a visit to Moscow, stated that no binding interstate documents have been signed with Russia. However, Kaza and Yuriy Shafranik, the Russian Federation's minister of fuel and power engineering, signed a protocol which expresses the view of Latvia and Russia view on oil transit.

Russia expressed the wish to take part in the privatization of Ventspils Nafta [Latvian oil exporting enterprise] and wants to buy not less than 30 percent of the enterprise. Eriks Kaza noted that Latvia wants to involve in this process partners from other countries as well. The protocol of agreement notes that Russia is prepared to help by providing specialists who together with independent foreign experts would assess the situation at Ventspils Nafta.

The Russian Ministry of Fuel and Power Engineering has ordered the oil company LUKoil to be an enterprise in charge of implementing projects on Latvian territory.

Lithuania

Lithuania: Security of Bosnian Peacekeepers Increased

WS2504091596 Tallinn BNS in English
1624 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Apr 24, BNS — After the death of a Lithuanian and Danish soldiers in Bosnia last week, the Danish government is introducing supplentary measures to ensure the security of its peacekeeping battalion DANBAT, in which Lithuanians also serve, and to avoid deaths from landmines.

Lithuanian LITPLA-4 commander senior lieutenant Darius Vaicekauskas said Tuesday in Vilnius that at the time of the explosion of Normundas Valteris and Arne Andersen's car, they had deviated from their route. This, perhaps, would not have happened if the soldiers had had devices which allowed more precise determination of their location. This week such devices will be delivered to the battalion's headquarters.

In addition, Vaicekauskas told journalists the procedures for patrolling territory have now been changed — this will be done more frequently by helicopter, and car patrols will be carried out only on thoroughly checked roads.

According to the commander, the danger of mines is the major one for the peacekeepers. Local inhabitants themselves are exhausted by years of war and try not to provoke conflict.

In the area controlled by DANBAT there are over 3 million mines, buried in more than 1000 mine fields. One of the peacekeepers' tasks is to coordinate how Serbian or Croatian troops have cleared the territory of mines, hidden by them during the war years.

On May 12 the LITPLA-4 soldiers will return home for a couple of weeks of leave.

Lithuania: Foreign Ministry Views Latvian Oil Prospecting Moves

WS0105083896 Tallinn BNS in English
1601 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vilnius, Apr 30, BNS — The Lithuanian foreign ministry cannot justify the Latvian government's actions in continuing to prepare a draft law on the licensing of Western oil firms to prospect for oil in a disputed territory of the Baltic Sea.

Lithuanian foreign ministry secretary Rimantas Sidlauskas believes that the Latvian government's "haste is not comprehensible in the context of a normal negotiating process."

"Negotiations with Latvia on sea border delimitations are proceeding very intensively and with good results," Sidlauskas told BNS. He heads the Lithuanian negotiating delegation. The next round takes place in Ryga on May 6-7.

On Monday the Latvian government's economics and finance committee submitted for discussion by the administration a draft law "On licensing agreements with the AMOCO Latvija Petroleum Company and with Oljeprospekting AB (OPAB)," the Latvian government's press service reported.

Last year in October the Latvian government signed a licensing agreement with AMOCO and OPAB, which were given the rights to carry out experimental drilling and prospect oil in the Baltic Sea.

According to the draft law, if oil is found, Latvia, without finansing the prospecting work, will receive 10 percent of the profit.

The law goes into effect if it is ratified by Latvian parliament.

According to Sidlauskas, the conditions of the agreement's validity are also that Lithuania and Latvia come to agreement on sea and shelf borders.

Lithuania: Director Guarantees Safety of Nuclear Power Plant

MS2604124796 London INDEPENDENT in English
26 Apr 96 p 10

[Report by Adrian Bridge: "Lithuanians Take Pride in Reactors"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ignalina, Lithuania — "For 10 years, people have been saying that this is another Chernobyl just waiting to happen. Well, it has not happened. And it is not going to happen. I can give you a firm guarantee."

As technical director of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania, Gennadij Negrivoda [as published] is used to being on the defensive. The two reactors at the plant are among the 15 that share the same design as the infamous reactor number four at Chernobyl which exploded 10 years ago yesterday.

Although they have been significantly improved over the past decade, they are frequently singled out by Western nuclear power experts as among the most dangerous in the world.

"In my view they are no worse than some of the early western nuclear power stations," insists Mr Negrivoda, squinting over every word. "But anyway, in the time since Chernobyl, they have been transformed into different reactors. They simply could not explode."

Safe or not, the power plant at Ignalina is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future.

Built when Lithuania belonged to the Soviet Union, the plant was designed to provide cheap power for all three Baltic states, and Belarus.

Lithuanians initially viewed it with hostility. But they changed their tune after they gained independence in 1991 and began to view the facility with pride.

By then they were also totally dependent on it. The two reactors in operation at Ignalina now generate more than 80 per cent of Lithuania's power, and closing them would plunge the country into darkness.

To those in the West who clamour for Ignalina to be closed, Mr Negrivoda asks: Where else are we going to get our electricity from? And who is going to pay for it?

Of the 15 RMBK Chernobyl-style reactors still operating in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania, the two at Ignalina are the biggest and the most modern.

Modernity, however, is not the word that springs to mind on passing through the set of control barriers at the entrance to the plant. Here at "Checkpoint Charlie" — as the controls are termed by the plant's 5,000-strong workforce the plant has an outdated, run-down feel.

That image is reinforced outside by the sight of rusty cranes hovering over the foundations of a third reactor, the building of which was abandoned following public protests shortly after the Chernobyl explosion.

In the immediate wake of the disaster, the Soviet Union modified the RMBK reactors aimed at ensuring nothing like it could ever happen again.

Despite Western assistance, Ignalina continued to be plagued by frequent mishaps, most worryingly the disappearance in 1992 of a fuel rod, now believed to have been stolen.

Such incidents have not helped convince the doubters that, in addition to technical improvements, the plant is now infused with the "culture of safety" in the workplace.

But according to Mr Negrivoda, these are routine occurrences. "All reactors have their weak points — even in the West — and that is how it should be. The point is, though, we are trying to improve all the time."

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